

Between Judaism and Christianity

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Between Judaism and Christianity

Art Historical Essays in Honor
of Elisheva (Elisabeth) Revel-Neher

Edited by

Katrin Kogman-Appel and Mati Meyer



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Cover illustration: Huntress and male warrior depicted in a panel installed next to the conjectured eastern entrance, inside the basilical hall of the Nile Festival Building.
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PREFACE

The nineteen essays assembled in this *Festschrift* represent what we consider the multi-array of interests evident in Professor Elisabeth (Elisheva) Revel-Neher's work of nearly four decades. They include contributions by internationally renowned scholars who have come to know and appreciate her work, including Walter Cahn, Evelyn Cohen, Eva Frojmovic, Colum Hourihane, Herbert Kessler, and the late Kurt Schubert, and Israeli art historians and archaeologists with whom she worked for many years and established close collegial relationships, among them Andreina Contessa, Sarit Shalev Eyni, Rina Talgam, and Zeev Weiss. During the last twenty years Elisheva Revel-Neher has been an advisor to many research students, some of whom have already established themselves as scholars in their own right and others who are just beginning promising careers: Rivka Ben-Sasson, Lihi Habas, Dalia-Ruth Halperin, Emma Maayan-Fanar, Shulamit Laderman, Margo Stroumsa-Uzan, and the two editors of this collection. And last, but not least, there is a contribution by one of her own Ph.D. supervisors, Bezalel Narkiss.

Although many more scholars and colleagues expressed a wish to contribute to this *Festschrift*, we decided to limit the scope to Elisheva Revel-Neher's own research interests and teaching areas: Jewish visual culture of late antiquity and the Middle Ages; early Christian and Byzantine art; and the cultural interactions between Jews and Christians in the realm of art. For the sake of cohesiveness the material in the book is concerned with only the late antique and medieval periods.

The studies presented to our colleague, teacher, mentor, and friend in this volume cover a variety of subjects dealing with pictorial messages encrypted in various artistic media. Thus they represent an approach that is characteristic of Elisheva Revel-Neher's long-term, diverse work and the dialogue she conducted with her colleagues and students. They range from late antique synagogues, Jewish funerary art, and early Christian and Byzantine mosaics to Byzantine manuscript illumination, Jewish book art, and the representation of the Old Testament in Western manuscripts. They address a broad array of topics: Jewish identity in the late antique period, as in the studies of Kurt Schubert and Rivka Ben-Sasson; patronage in late antique Jewish and Christian religious

architecture, as demonstrated by Lihi Habas; Jewish-Christian polemics and the representation of the “Other,” as exemplified in the chapters by Colum Hourihane and Emma Maayan-Fanar; the question of Jewish or Christian illuminators of Hebrew books represented in the articles by Evelyn Cohen and Eva Frojmovic; the cultural background of illustrations in Hebrew manuscripts in Katrin Kogman-Appel’s essay; Christian cosmology and dogma shown in the studies of Herbert L. Kessler, Shulamit Laderman, and Rina Talgam; the imagery of the Temple in the chapters by Walter Cahn and Andreina Contessa; the question of the Jewish and Christian perception of women in the studies by Mati Meyer and Sarit Shalev-Eyni.

The included contributions all reflect something of Elisheva’s enthusiasm for and fascination with the multi-layered fabric of late antique and medieval religious life and its multiple links to the visual cultures of Europe and Byzantium. They also represent a range of methodological approaches and attempts to come to grips with the cultural variety of medieval religious art, and they reflect years of research, teaching, and a fruitful dialogue with colleagues in Europe and the United States, as well in Israel.

Lastly, we would like to extend our gratitude to the contributors to this book, first for their enlightening and creative essays and for their enthusiastic response to this project and their support. The editors of the book would also like to thank one another for constructive ideas and criticism, patience and tolerance, and the pleasure of a fruitful collaboration.

Beer Sheva and Ra’anana December 2007

ELISHEVA REVEL-NEHER

Ziva Amishai-Maisels

Elisheva Revel-Neher is today an acknowledged leader in the field of medieval Jewish art from its origins in the period of the destruction of the Second Temple to the Renaissance, with a special emphasis on Byzantine art. Her engagement with this subject spans a period of almost forty years and parallels the period in which Jewish art was finally recognized as a legitimate branch of art historical research. Moreover, she was one of the group of pioneers who explored and consolidated the rich body of material of Jewish art which led to its acceptance.

Elisheva was born in France into a family who was at that time in hiding from the Nazis. Her family had a rich heritage of involvement with Judaism on both the religious and the intellectual level. Her uncle, André Neher, subsequently became a leading Jewish philosopher and her father became a Supreme Court justice in France. The family was also very interested in art, and while in hiding, her grandfather, Albert Neher, wrote and illustrated four Passover Haggadahs for the family's private use, one for each year they spent underground. Elisheva eventually published these Haggadahs in facsimile with an introduction (2000). One can postulate an unconscious connection between these treasured manuscripts and her interest in manuscript illumination, which most likely dates back to those dark days.

Elisheva began her academic studies in art history in Strasbourg, where the family resettled after the war, delving into medieval art with Louis Grodecki. She then went on to study Byzantine art, especially manuscript illumination, with Suzy Dufrenne, a leading expert in the field, with whom she completed her M.A. on the influence of rabbinic texts on early medieval illuminations of the Book of Genesis (1972). By that time, she had already determined that Jewish subject matter in art and Jewish art would be the main foci of her studies. While publishing the results of her research, she began working on her doctorate on the depiction of the Ark of the Covenant in art. This work, as well as her lifelong Zionism, led Elisheva, her husband, the physicist Daniel Revel, and their two sons to immigrate to Israel in 1974. She immediately began studying with Bezalel Narkiss, an expert in the field of medieval

Jewish art, whom she had met at the World Congress of Jewish Studies in 1973, where she had presented a paper. Narkiss became co-joined with Dufrenne in supervising Elisheva's doctorate, which was awarded *summa cum laude* by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1980.

In 1976, shortly after her arrival in Israel, Elisheva began to teach in the Department of Art History at the Hebrew University as an assistant to Narkiss, and continued there until her early retirement in 2005. She became a much-loved role model for her students, as she brilliantly combined the excellence of an academic career with marriage and raising her sons, one of whom was born when she finished her B.A. and one when she finished her M.A. She dedicated herself to her many students as though they, too, were her children, spending time to help them finish their M.A. and Ph.D. theses. She also undertook important administrative jobs: she was twice head of the Department of Art History, periods in which the department prospered, and was for many years head of the Department of General Studies, the undergraduate interdisciplinary program.

During this period, she introduced several course innovations. In 1981, inspired by Narkiss, she developed one entitled "Introduction to Jewish Art from Ancient to Modern Times," which generations of students have now taken. Shortly thereafter, she inaugurated courses on the Jewish sources of art on both elementary and advanced levels. While teaching courses on medieval, Byzantine and Jewish art, she developed specialized curricula on "The Image of the Jew in Art," and organized and helped to teach interdisciplinary courses such as "Biblical Iconography in Jewish, Christian, and Moslem Art," and "Cult Buildings in Pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Moslem Art."

In her research as well as in her teaching, Elisheva has always been concerned with the relationship between Jewish and Christian art and the various interpretations that the two religions applied to the same symbols. This approach first manifested itself in her doctorate, "L'Arche d'alliance; iconographie et interprétations dans l'art juif paléo-chrétien et byzantin du 2^{ème} au 15^{ème} siècles," in several articles, and in two books that developed this theme, adding many new insights and innovations: *Le signe de la rencontre: iconographie de l'Arche d'alliance dans l'art juif et chrétien du second au 10^{ème} siècles* (1984) and *Le témoignage de l'absence. Les objets du sanctuaire à Byzance et dans l'art juif du 11^{ème} au 15^{ème} siècles* (1998).

Using the Ark of the Covenant and its related attributes as an example of this methodology, Elisheva showed how these symbols were used

to develop a theme of messianic longing for the Jews, connecting this motif with Jewish theological writings from the Bible, the Talmud, and liturgical and rabbinic sources. Concentrating, in the first book on the early Jewish use of the theme from the Bar Kochba coins and the paintings of Dura Europos through the synagogue mosaics from the fourth to the seventh centuries, and in the second, on Ashkenazi and Sephardi manuscript illuminations from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries, she showed that despite a gap of hundreds of years between the surviving examples, both the formal elements involved in the portrayal of the Ark and its attributes as well as their messianic interpretation remained in force. This suggests that this was also the case during the time for which we have no representations of the Ark in Jewish art, owing to migration and the destruction of works of art.

On the Christian side, the symbol underwent major changes in meaning. In the first book, she shows how at first it was acclaimed as a Christian symbol, part of Christianity's identification of itself as the New Israel. In the second book, she demonstrates how its meaning later changed in Byzantium, where it became a symbol of loss or lack: its loss by the Jews became proof of the loss of their status as the Chosen People and of the Christian assertion of having been chosen in their place. Here, she shows an acute awareness of the interplay and dialogue between the two groups: she claims that it was specifically the adaptation of the Ark as a Christian symbol that was used to denigrate Judaism that led the Jews once more to affirm that this was *their* messianic symbol and to stress the Ark and the Temple implements in full-page illuminations. Other examples of this approach in various subjects can be found in her "Le Bâton d'Aaron: eschatologie juive et typologie chrétienne" (1995–96), "Job in Christian and Jewish Medieval Art" (1995), and "The Offerings of the High-Priest: Judeo-Christian Polemics and the Early Byzantine Iconography of Melchizedek" (2004).

This interest in the relationships between the art of the two religions led Elisheva to develop two different fields of research. On the one hand, she continued her work on the use of Jewish texts on Paleo-Christian and Byzantine art, a mode of study that was led at that time by Kurt Weitzmann. She began publishing articles in this area even as she worked on her doctorate: "Contribution des textes rabbiniques à l'étude de la Genèse de Vienne" (1972), "Présence juive dans l'iconographie paléo-chrétienne" (1973), and an article on the sources of the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes (1990–91). On the one hand, she agreed with the concept postulated by Weitzmann and Narkiss

concerning the existence of an early Jewish art dating from Hellenistic times that influenced Christian art, along with its midrashic and rabbinic ideas. On the other, she proposed a more direct contact between Christian art and Jewish sources as well as Jewish life.

Parallel to her work on her doctorate, Elisheva had begun to work on the image of the Jew in Byzantine art. She approached the problem from two different angles in two articles on the headdress of the high priest and its relation to those of the Magi, which had surprisingly shrunk from Phrygian bonnets in Paleo-Christian art to small boxes set atop the head in Byzantine art. In “Problèmes d’iconographie judéo-chrétienne: le thème de la coiffure du Cohen Gadol dans l’art byzantin” (1974)—an article that was the basis of the lecture she gave at the World Congress for Jewish Studies in 1973—she showed that this boxlike structure was based on Jewish phylacteries that had become emblematic of the Jews. In “L’iconographie judéo-chrétienne en milieu byzantin: une source de connaissance pour l’histoire du monde juif à l’époque préchrétienne et talmudique” (1975), she proved how the development of this imagery showed the lasting use in Byzantium of the daily wearing of the prayer shawl and phylacteries by the Jews not only during prayer, as is still common today, but in the streets as well, basing her argument on illustrations of Jews in Byzantine manuscripts and on Talmudic descriptions of Babylonian Jews, the very Jews who were under Byzantine rule at this time and who obviously contributed strongly to this image.

This research led Elisheva to one of her major books, *The Image of the Jew in Byzantine Art* (1992), in which she revealed a surprising fact: despite the strong anti-Semitic tone of Byzantine theology, and despite contemporary anti-Semitic caricatures of Jews in Western art, Byzantine art continued to depict the Jews in a neutral way that shows an almost philo-Semitic attitude. Her analysis of the coexistence in the same time and place of anti- and philo-Semitic aspects was a revolutionary commentary on the complexity of Christian attitudes toward the Jews. She later reinforced these findings by analyzing the image of the Jew in English medieval art (1995). She continued her research on Byzantium’s dual attitude toward Judaism by comparing Byzantine and Western representations of Ecclesia and Synagoga, which she published in “Black and White, Old and New: Re-examining the confrontation of Church and Synagogue in Byzantine Art” (2007).

Lately, especially after the discovery of the synagogue mosaics in Sephoris in 1993, Elisheva has become interested in a particularly

challenging topic—the representation of God in Jewish art. This line of inquiry has resulted in a series of articles, including: “Seeing the Invisible: Singularity of Jewish Art and the Sanctification of Pictures (2003)” and “Seeing the Voice: Configuring the Non-Figurable in Early Medieval Jewish Art” (2006). These articles offer new interpretations of the use of the “Hand of God” in Jewish art, showing that, depending on the context, it is a follow-on sign that indicates the full meaning of the picture, a way of representing the voice of God, and a way of stressing that the prophets near whom it appears in Dura Europos are acting as messengers for a higher power. She contrasted the use of this sign in Jewish as opposed to Christian art, stressing the Jewish need not to configure the Divine in a physical sense. Thus in synagogue mosaics and in later Jewish manuscript illumination, the closed doors of the Ark suggest the ineffable quality of a God who can be neither seen nor figured. She has also recently discussed the issue in the context of Jacob’s ladder and is continuing to pursue this subject in her forthcoming book, tentatively entitled *Facets of the Invisible: Configuring the Non-Figurable in Jewish Medieval Art*. Her publications are always utterly lucid and beautifully argued, as befits an eloquent scholar, well versed in many fields.

Aside from her scholarly work, Elisheva has made important contributions to the popularization of the study of Jewish art. She organized two major international conferences: “The Illustration of the Septuagint” in memory of Kurt Weitzmann (1994) and “Scripture and Picture: The Bible in Art” (1999). She has also been active in the Center for Jewish Art at the Hebrew University, in the Society for Jewish Art, and in the World Congress for Jewish Studies. She has lectured on Jewish art throughout Europe, the United States, and Mexico, has taught the subject at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (1991), lectured on the Jewish sources of Byzantine art at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (1991), and conducted research seminars on Jewish Art at the Centre National de Recherche Scientifique (1985–1988, 2002) in Paris. She was instrumental in starting the Program of Studies in Jewish Art at Bar Ilan University, and gave the opening lectures there in 1993 and 1994.

Her many students have gone on to careers in Jewish and Byzantine art at several Israeli universities: Katrin Kogman-Appel at Ben Gurion University of the Negev, Shula Laderman at Bar Ilan University and the Schechter Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, Emma Maayan-Fanar at Haifa University, Mati Meyer at the Open University, and Lihi Habas at Hebrew University.

A wonderful teacher, a consummate researcher, and a very special human being, Elisheva Ravel-Neher has always been ready to offer a helping hand to her students and colleagues, in both scholarly and personal ways. I am pleased and proud to say that it has been a privilege for me to work with her and to call her my friend and my colleague.

PART ONE

LATE ANTIQUE JEWISH ART

THE MOSAICS OF THE NILE FESTIVAL BUILDING
AT SEPPHORIS AND THE LEGACY OF THE
ANTIOCHENE TRADITION

Zeev Weiss

Many geometric and figural mosaics have been discovered in Roman-Byzantine Palestine. Some have been described in preliminary reports and others have been discussed at length, addressing some key questions regarding the iconographic and stylistic study of ancient mosaics in the region. One such question concerns their possible sources of influence. At times scholars compare a specific mosaic to other finds in its immediate vicinity, as well as to those from the city and suburbs of Antioch, where many mosaics have been unearthed, mainly in private houses of the early second to the middle of the sixth century CE.¹ For example, in his discussion of the mosaic in the Ḥammat Tiberias synagogue, dated to the fourth century CE, Moshe Dothan considers the mosaics of Antioch to be a major source of comparison and inspiration.² Asher Ovadiah adopts Dothan's conclusions and elaborates: "A mosaic artist or artists may have been brought from Antioch to Ḥammath Tiberias, to be assisted on the spot by local artists."³ There is no doubt that the Antiochene workshop was a source of inspiration for the mosaicist in the Roman-Byzantine East, including Palestine, but we do not know if this was an absolute, unequivocal, and direct influence or if there was a predisposition to another source, not necessarily from Antioch, that played a role in shaping ancient Palestinian mosaic art.

¹ Doro Levi (1947) is still the most vital and comprehensive study conducted on the Antiochene mosaics, although several others have since been published, providing additional information and new images and further developing the discussion on various aspects connected with these finds; see Campbell (1988); Kondoleon (2000); Becker and Kondoleon (2005); Cimok (2002); Huskinson (2004), 134–152. On the city, its history, citizens, and institutions, see Downey (1961), 202–578; Liebeschuetz (1972), 40–100, 167–255.

² Dothan (1983), 45, 52. Rina Talgam also compares the Ḥammat Tiberias pavement with the Antiochene mosaics, though her insights are less profound; see Talgam (1988), 124–125 (Hebrew).

³ A. and R. Ovadiah (1987), 158.

Earlier discussions on the subject are not entirely useful because they deal only with an isolated mosaic and not a wider collection of geometric and figural mosaics from the period, as was the case with groups of mosaics discovered at a number of other sites in the Roman-Byzantine East.⁴ This was not true at Sepphoris in the Lower Galilee, where more than sixty mosaics dating from the third to the sixth century CE have been discovered in recent years.⁵ The corpus of mosaics from Sepphoris, comprising a variety of examples discovered at one site and covering a long period of time, permits a broader examination of the subject.

Owing to the limited scope of this chapter, I focus on one building that has several mosaic pavements theoretically suited to the needs of such a discussion. The Nile Festival Building, constructed in Sepphoris in the early fifth century CE, affords us an opportunity to study the nature and significance of the finds and to consider the possible sources of influence on the design of its mosaics. It should be remembered that the artistic remains in this building are but one component of the city and that only an examination of the broader assemblage of mosaics from Sepphoris will enable us to adopt the preliminary conclusions I propose in this chapter.

The Nile Festival Building is located in Lower Sepphoris, east of the *cardo* and opposite the bathhouse.⁶ Its somewhat irregular plan approximates an elongated rectangle measuring ca. 50 × 35 m; it has at least two entrances, one on the west, from the main colonnaded street, and the other on the north. A mosaic floor containing an eight-line inscription was laid on the sidewalk in front of the western entrance. The inscription mentions Procopius and his son-in-law Patricius, who, according to Leah Di Segni, were the artists who created the building's mosaic or, as Glen Bowersock has recently suggested, Procopius was the governor of Palaestina Secunda and the latter was married to his daughter and owned the building.⁷ The structure's central location in

⁴ See, e.g., the finds from Shahba-Philippopolis, Apamea in Syria, or Nea Paphos in Cyprus: Balty (1995), 141–152; (1979), 70–90; Dunbabin (1999), 166–171; Michaelides (1987).

⁵ For a description of the mosaics from Sepphoris, see Netzer and Weiss (1994); Weiss and Netzer (1997), 2–21; Roussin (1996), 123–125; Talgam and Weiss (2004), 47–123; Weiss (2003), 94–101; Weiss (2005).

⁶ Netzer and Weiss (1995), 166–171; Weiss and Talgam (2002), 55–61.

⁷ Di Segni (2002), 91–97; Bowersock (2004), 764–766. Though Bowersock's reading seems reasonable at the outset, his conclusions regarding the function of the building and its date entirely contradict the archaeological finds; see Weiss and Talgam (2002), 58–61. No feature characterizing private dwellings, e.g., *triclinium*, kitchen, bath, or

the city, its artistic richness, its size, and its many rooms, as well as the fact that it bears no characteristic features of a dwelling, indicate that it was a public building, perhaps a municipal basilica.⁸

The Nile Festival Building can be thought of as having two wings—a basilical hall (15 × 10 m) flanked by corridors on all four sides, located in the center of the building, and the largest and most important of the rooms surrounding this hall, which was paved with the Nile Festival mosaic. East of the hall there was an inner courtyard surrounded by rooms of various sizes, one of which, clearly a latrine, has survived.

The entire building was paved with mosaics, some of which are very well preserved. Some rooms had figural mosaics, but most of them, as well as the corridors, featured geometric designs displaying a particularly rich array of patterns and an exceptional variety of colors. Their iconography, composition, and style raise interesting questions regarding Byzantine secular mosaics in this region and certainly deepen our insight into the culture and society of Sepphoris. The following discussion presents the mosaics discovered in the building in terms of three main categories and then evaluates their relationship to the Antiochene tradition and their degree of dependence on that tradition.

Geometric Carpets

Several mosaics found in different parts of the building have geometric or floral designs of various forms, colors, and styles, some of which follow patterns that were also known in Antioch. The westernmost room in the building, for example, contains a long mosaic carpet depicting a combination of squares and a rhombus encompassing different

any other installation, was found inside the building to indicate that it was a private house that was supposedly owned by the daughter of the governor. On the contrary, it includes many different-sized rooms arranged throughout the building in groups to suit communal use. The pottery shards as well as the many coins found in the soundings within and outside the building clearly indicate that it was constructed in the early fifth century CE, and not a century later. Not only do these finds support the suggested date, but the construction of the Nile Festival Building in this period also corresponds well with the development of the civic center in Lower Sepphoris.

⁸ Byzantine sources define “basilica” as a meeting place for citizens; e.g., “a basilica for the public’s benefit,” in the words of Choricus, was erected in Gaza in the sixth century CE; see Foerster and Richsteig (1929), III, 55. A civic basilica is mentioned in one of the inscriptions discovered at Sepphoris; this building might be the Nile Festival Building; see Avi-Yonah (1961), 184–187; Di Segni (1999), II, 157–158.

geometrical patterns, a design that is also found in the House of the Bird Rinceau or in Bath C at Antioch.⁹ Two other rooms in the Nile Festival Building, one in the western wing and other in the eastern wing (Fig. 1), contain a mosaic carpet completely covered with a well-known floral design (*semis*) composed of a lattice pattern of elongated white scales with polychrome rosebuds in their center that is also recurrent in Antioch.¹⁰

Figural Panels in Geometric Carpets

In several cases, figural panels were incorporated into geometric carpets, probably to indicate a change in direction for regulating traffic flow in the building or to emphasize the entryway to an important space. A panel depicting a centaur was found next to the intersection of the two main corridors outside the northeastern corner of the basilical hall. The centaur stands on his hind legs and holds a tray bearing the Greek inscription θεὸς βοηθός (God the Helper) in his raised arms.¹¹ Similar inscriptions were used by Jews and Christians alike and thus cannot help us in identifying the building's owners.¹²

Another such panel was integrated into a larger carpet located next to the conjectured entrance to the basilical hall in the central part of the building. It depicts two figures—a huntress, probably an Amazon, and a male warrior—on galloping horses (Fig. 2).¹³ The huntress and the warrior appear to have killed a lion and are attacking a panther that is being chased by a hunting dog. The scene is set in front of a city gate or a fortified villa. A similar representation on a silver plate dated to the sixth century CE is now in the Dumbarton Oaks collection.¹⁴ Kurt Weitzmann has pointed out that the depiction on the silver plate is a

⁹ Levi (1947), 257–258, 289–291.

¹⁰ Dothan (1983), 51; Ovadiah (1987), Cat. Nos. 8, 185, 215, 221, 227 with references there to the sites under discussion; cf. with Antioch: Levi (1947), Pls. XCIIa, CXXVIC, CXXXVIIIId–f, CXLIb–c.

¹¹ The posture of the centaur resembles that of the zodiac sign of Sagittarius from the early fifth-century CE synagogue excavated at Sepphoris; see Weiss (2005), 118–119. Their similarities may suggest that the city had a local workshop that relied on Roman models, but whose artists were also inspired by earlier mosaics in the city.

¹² Testa (1972), Nos. 73, 74, 75; Patrich and Di Segni (1987), 272–281; Zori (1966), 132–133.

¹³ Weiss and Talgam (2002), 75–76.

¹⁴ Ross (1962), II, Pls. 2, 9.

pastiche,¹⁵ maintaining that the artist drew his figures not only from different scenes but also from different realms—the Trojan saga and the hunting scene—both of which popular themes in late antiquity.

Hunting scenes similar to the one at Sepphoris appear in other mosaic pavements of the period—from Antioch and Apamea in Syria and in a Coptic tapestry from Egypt dated to the fifth century CE.¹⁶ Although the Sepphoris mosaic follows the general theme in these examples, it differs from them in certain respects: for instance, in the appearance of the huntress, the hunting dog, and the city walls and in the omission of the double ax and *pelta* shield.

Another panel, located on the other side of the entrance to the basilical hall, portrays two naked hunters standing next to a tree, a wild boar at their feet (Fig. 3).¹⁷ The portrayal of naked hunters indicates that these were probably representations of mythological heroes; the boar at their feet suggests the myth of the killing of the Calydonian boar; the stabile posture of the figures suggests that the hunt is over. Our assumption is that the scene represents the quarrel over the spoils of the Calydonian boar between Meleager, who decided to grant it to Atalanta, and his uncles. This scene is also known from the House of the Red Pavement in Antioch, but appears there in a completely different format (see below).¹⁸

Figural Mosaics

Two rooms in the Nile Festival Building were decorated entirely with figural mosaics, and traces of similar floors were found in two other areas as well. One mosaic floor portraying Amazons has been partially preserved in the easternmost room. The scenes inside the border are divided into two horizontal bands.¹⁹ At either end of the upper register, two horses are standing next to a tree; in the center of the band, a canopy hangs from either side of the tree, separating them. Two figures, probably Amazons or an Amazon and her male companion, of whom

¹⁵ Weitzmann (1960), 48–49.

¹⁶ Levi (1947), 282–283, Pl. LXIV:b; Dulière (1968), 5–15; Stauffer (1995), 10, 22. Such scenes are known in other locales; see, e.g., Dunbabin (1978), 251; Poulsen (1997), 38–50.

¹⁷ Weiss and Talgam (2002), 76.

¹⁸ Levi (1947), 68–71.

¹⁹ Weiss and Talgam (2002), 77–80.

only traces can be discerned, are seated facing one another under the canopy (*parapétasma*). A row of dancing Amazons, of which only three and traces of a fourth are visible, originally covered the entire lower register (Fig. 4).

To the best of our knowledge, such a depiction has not yet been found in Roman art, and thus it seems that this combination of themes in Sepphoris of late antiquity was not influenced by Classical Greek mythology. The seated couple in the upper register are most likely hunters at rest after a chase and may resemble the depiction of either Meleager and Atalanta or Aeneas and Dido at Sarrîn, although the latter are not seated under a *parapétasma*, but are sharing a veil that covers their shoulders.²⁰ To a certain extent, the scene is also reminiscent of representations of a hunters' picnic, as in the central scene in the "Small Hunt" mosaic at Piazza Armerina.²¹ The figures at Sepphoris, however, are not reclining on the ground, and since the mosaic is completely broken here we have no indication that the scene being portrayed included a meal.²² In light of the content of the upper register, it seems that the dancing Amazons in the lower register are not performing a cultic dance. They are rather entertaining the seated Amazons, or the Amazon and her male companion shown above them, in the after-dinner chorus of singers or dancers that was customary at private banquets in late antiquity, and has been described by several authors.²³

The Nile mosaic is the largest (7.6 × 6.2 m) and most impressive one to have been uncovered in this building (Fig. 5).²⁴ The Nile River runs through the center of the floor; its main stream delimits the upper part of the floor, while a small brook meanders through the hunting scenes in its lower part. Vivid illustrations of the characteristic flora and fauna of the river adorn this section. A Nilometer—a pointed column positioned on top of a rectangular structure with an arched entrance facing the river—is depicted in the center of the upper register. The numbers 15, 16, and 17 engraved on the Nilometer indicate the level of the river at

²⁰ Balty (1990), 54–57.

²¹ Carandini (1982), fig. 94.

²² Images of Atalanta and Meleager at the Feast after the Hunt that appear on Roman sarcophagi usually follow a different scheme in which other participants, such as the Dioskouri, were included; see Woodford (1992), VI:1, Nos. 128, 129, 130.

²³ Rossiter (1991), 202–204, with references to several ancient authors. Bowersock suggests that the Amazons in this mosaic are symbolic of Penthesilea departing for the battle at Troy, where she is killed by Achilles; see Bowersock (2006), 60–61.

²⁴ Netzer and Weiss (1992), 75–80; Weiss and Talgam (2002), 61–73.

its flooding stages in cubits. A youth standing above a kneeling figure seems to be carving the number IZ (17 cubits) on the Nilometer with a hammer and chisel.

Various kinds of Nilometers appear on Roman and Byzantine mosaics, coins, tapestries, glass, and other media.²⁵ Similar depictions appear, for example, in the mosaic at Sarrîn,²⁶ but we know of a precise iconographic parallel to the Sepphoris mosaic on a silver *trulla* dated to late-fifth/early-sixth century CE, currently located in the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg.²⁷ The depiction at Sepphoris and others like it might be artistic interpretations of the actual act of measuring the flooded Nile, whereas other representations (e.g., in the Bet Leontis mosaic at Bet Shean or in the mosaic of the Church of the Multiplying of the Loaves and Fish at Tabgha) illustrate the Nilometer itself with no reference to a specific occasion.²⁸

Two large figures of a reclining man and woman appear in the upper two corners of the mosaic. The figure on the left, with the Greek inscription αἴγυ[πιτος] above it, is a woman leaning on a basket laden with fruit and holding an overflowing cornucopia. These attributes enable us to interpret the figure as both a personification of the land of Egypt and a representation of Euthenia, the female consort of the Nile and the personification of the abundance brought about by the ideal high tide of the Nile River.²⁹ The male personification of the Nile, sitting on a hippopotamus with the Nile's water issuing from its mouth, appears in the opposite corner. He extends his hand toward two naked figures that are bearing gifts and seem to be marching toward him. Another naked figure supports the foot of the Nile god with one hand and offers him a wreath with the other.

The mark on the Nilometer, mentioned earlier, indicates that the flood had reached the *semeion*, the water level required to yield a successful crop.³⁰ At this time, a signal was sent rapidly throughout the country: dikes blocking the irrigation canals would open and the fields would be flooded. In the Roman period, the sending of the signal was symbolically represented by the figure of Semasia, a young woman on a galloping

²⁵ Bonneau (1971), 49–65, Pl. Xb; Price and Trel (1977), 166–168.

²⁶ Balty (1990), 65–67, Pl. XXXIII.1.

²⁷ Peirce and Tyler (1934), II, 82, Pl. 44a; Dodd (1961), 53.

²⁸ Zori (1966), 123–134; Schneider (1937), 58–63.

²⁹ Kákosy (1982), 290–298; Jentel (1988), IV.1:120–124.

³⁰ Bonneau (1971), 53.

horse holding a palm branch.³¹ The area beneath the Nilometer in our mosaic shows the arrival of Semasia in Alexandria, announcing that the flood had reached the *semeion*. To the right is a monumental column surmounted by a black statue of a man holding a spear in one hand and a torch in the other. The number IZ, which also appears at the top of the Nilometer, is inscribed next to the torch.

This monument is probably the misnamed “Pompey Column” that stood in the compound of Serapis in Alexandria and was dedicated in the third century CE to the emperor Diocletian.³² Beside the monument a boy, wearing a tunic, is gazing at two horsemen approaching Alexandria. Semasia is the lead rider and behind her is a male on horseback who is wearing a short tunic and a mantle that appears to be blowing in the wind. Semasia is dressed in trousers and carries a branch, near which the number IZ appears once again. Alexandria is represented by a city gate between two round towers, beside another, taller, round tower with a flame at its top. The latter depicts the Pharos, the famous lighthouse of Alexandria and one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.³³ The monument and the Pharos adjacent to the city gate clearly delineate the scene and the context of the story illustrated in the mosaic.

The area to the right of the column and the lower part of the mosaic carpet is devoted to various hunting scenes, including a lion devouring an ox and a bear devouring a wild boar. Scenes of animal combat are usually portrayed in Byzantine Nilotic mosaics, but in a more abbreviated form than the one at Sepphoris.³⁴

Looking at the broader picture, one can say that the Nile mosaic of Sepphoris belongs to a relatively small group of mosaics that not only depict the flora and fauna of the Nile or focus on a certain scene but also represent festivals connected with the inundation. The most spectacular of these depictions appears in the mosaic from Palestrina,³⁵ which should also be compared, for example, to the mosaic in the tepidarium of the Bath at Lepcis Magna (early third century CE) or the one at Sarrîn

³¹ Meyboom (1995), 72–73.

³² Fraser (1972), II, 85–90; Empereur (1998), 100–108.

³³ Pliny, *Historia Naturalis* 36.83. For a discussion on the Pharos and its actual appearance in light of the literary sources and artistic representations, see Handler (1971), 59–61; Clayton (1991), 138–157.

³⁴ Alföldi-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins (1980), 45–46, Pls. 56–57, 64, 84/2, 85; Hachlili (1998), 106–120.

³⁵ Meyboom (1995), 20–79.

(early sixth century CE).³⁶ Our mosaic focuses on both the symbolic announcement of the Nile's water level reaching a certain mark on the Nilometer, which augurs a successful crop, and on various hunting scenes. Such a rich and varied mélange of motifs in one floor was quite uncommon in the Byzantine period and may indicate that the artists who designed it adopted a particularly free creative approach.

The Antiochene Influence on Shaping the Mosaic Art at Sepphoris

As noted above, the geometric, floral, and even some of the figural carpets found in the Nile Festival Building have parallels among the Antiochene mosaics. What role did the Antiochene tradition play in their design? To what extent, if any, can we prove that the artists were influenced by that tradition and perhaps even based their work upon it? The following discussion explores some aspects of the Sepphoris mosaics in light of the Antiochene tradition and also introduces some thoughts regarding the relationship between center and periphery.

Geometric and floral patterns, such as the *semis* or rainbow found at Sepphoris—at times set in one frame and at other times filling an entire mosaic carpet—are well known at Antioch.³⁷ The selection of the patterns and the inclusion of figural panels in the center of the carpet are also familiar features at Antioch and elsewhere.³⁸

The figural depictions in the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building are based on the mythological tradition; however, they deviate somewhat from the original tradition, so that often there are compositions that are unknown at Antioch. Some of the figures appearing in the building, such as the quarrel over the spoils of the Calydonian boar, also appear at Antioch (Fig. 6), but the depictions there differ from those at Sepphoris (see Fig. 3):³⁹ at Antioch, the boar lies between Atalanta and Meleager, and there is a third figure to the right. Unlike their counterparts at Sepphoris, where the two hunters stand in frontal view, the three figures from Antioch are dressed and armed variously, each

³⁶ Foucher (1965), 137–141, Fig. 1; Balty (1990), 60–68, Pls. XXX–XXXIII.

³⁷ Levi (1947), 405–407, 436–53; Dunbabin (1999), 163–164, 176–177.

³⁸ Levi (1947), Pls. XLVIIa, LXXb, LXXIII; Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 222–227; Balty (1995), 42–46.

³⁹ Levi (1947), 68–71; and see above, p. 00.

in a different posture to give the impression that they are quarreling over the dead boar.

The mounted hunting couple resembles that on a panel at the Yakto complex in Antioch that depicts a similar theme, but an in-depth examination indicates differences here as well.⁴⁰ The arms and the garb of the three female huntresses in the partially preserved panel at the Yakto complex differ from those at Sepphoris, where an Amazon and a male warrior are depicted. A rock and a tree to the right of the panel represent the landscape at the Yakto complex, whereas at Sepphoris the city gate or fortified villa is shown at the left side of the panel. The two panels also differ in style: whereas the overlapping and the foreshortening of the figures at the Yakto complex afford them some depth, the figures at Sepphoris are rendered naturalistically (although not always successfully), with free movement and a sense of volume.

The Nilotic landscape, with lotus flowers and birds, appears infrequently, mainly as a marginal effect, in some Antiochene mosaics. None of them, however, includes the major themes that characterize Nilotic mosaics.⁴¹ Above all, their absence at Antioch underscores the great difference between them and the finds at Sepphoris. The Nilotic depictions gained a degree of popularity in Byzantine Palestine and seem to follow patterns that originated somewhere other than Antioch.

Abandonment of the emblem tradition at Sepphoris in favor of mosaic carpets in which the figures are arranged in one frame reflects similar trends in Antioch, as pointed out by Irving Lavin, Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, and others, but the carpets are not identical in their compositional arrangement.⁴² The depictions in the *Megalopsychia* or the Worcester Hunt mosaic (Fig. 7), for example, appear in one frame but are arranged so that they can be viewed from four sides.⁴³ Those in the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building are arranged in horizontal registers identical to the Hunt mosaic from Apamea, where they also appear in several bands that can be seen in their entirety from one place in the hall.⁴⁴ However, the latter creates a rather monolithic impression, with no single focal point and no narrative succession,⁴⁵ whereas

⁴⁰ Levi (1947), 282–83, Pl. LXIV:b.

⁴¹ See, e.g., Levi (1947), 595–596, Pl. CLXXXI.

⁴² Lavin (1963), 189–195, 204–244; Dunbabin (1999), 176–185.

⁴³ Levi (1947), 337–345, 363–365; Becker and Kondoleon (2005), 228–237.

⁴⁴ Balty (1969), 7–13, 18–26; (1979), 104–109.

⁴⁵ Dunbabin (1999), 183.

the Nile mosaic from Sepphoris has a predetermined focal point and contains a complex story running from one band to the next, to some degree recalling the North African tradition (Fig. 8).⁴⁶

The design of figures and animals in the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building differ from other known examples in the region. The artists at Sepphoris were concerned with the proportions of the human figures, which in some cases were elongated and massive, quite often rendering the impression of exaggerated modeling.⁴⁷ Some of these trends are also found among the Antioch mosaics;⁴⁸ however, it is doubtful whether this precise tradition was the only source of inspiration for the artists at Sepphoris. It should be noted that some of the stylistic trends characterizing the Sepphoris mosaics have some parallels in the West, particularly in a number of North African mosaics.

In light of our analysis, it seems that one should not necessarily associate the Nile Festival Building mosaics at Sepphoris solely with the Antioch tradition. Rather, they point to a more complex trend that integrates traditions from the East and the West—from Antioch and North Africa. The artists of the Sepphoris mosaic were influenced, so we believe, by a number of different sources and, in fact, created artistic expressions that may not necessarily have been dependent on any single workshop. The appearance of North African indicators in Palestinian art, for example, is not unique to the mosaics of the Nile Festival Building; they are also found, although to a lesser degree, in mosaics from the Roman period. According to Lucille Roussin, the early third-century CE mosaics at Ein Ya'el evidence a synthesis between East and West.⁴⁹ She also points out that the largest mosaic in the public building excavated north of the *decumanus* in Sepphoris reflects the North African tradition of the period.⁵⁰ Following the iconographical study of the Nablus mosaic and a comparative analysis with a group of pavements from Shahba-Philippopolis, Claudine Dauphin argues that the mosaics in both locales were produced by Western mosaicists brought to the Eastern provinces in the second half of the third century, from

⁴⁶ Lavin (1963), 231–235; Dunbabin (1978), 46–64; Dorigo (1971), 180–188.

⁴⁷ For the figural style of the mosaic found in the Nile Festival building, see Weiss and Talgam (2002), 84–85.

⁴⁸ Dunbabin (1999), 180–181.

⁴⁹ Roussin (1995), 31–42.

⁵⁰ Roussin (1999), I, 171–175; see also Roussin (1994), 221–230, where she argues, unconvincingly, that an acanthus mosaic in another room inside the building was executed by an artist who came from North Africa.

either Rome or North Africa.⁵¹ The fourth-century CE mosaics at Lod demonstrate a further development:⁵² the artists there reverted from the long-established composition of pictorial panels in the mosaics of the third century, which reflected the Antiochene tradition, to motifs and compositions from the mosaics in the Roman West, particularly those of North Africa.

In conclusion, the early fifth-century CE mosaics from the Nile Festival Building at Sepphoris represent only one link in the longer chain denoting the development of the region's mosaic art. Together with other finds from this area, this art form demonstrates the nature of change. Mosaic art in ancient Palestine was clearly shaped in the Roman period by the Antiochene tradition, although with some local variation. Western traditions, such as those from North Africa, gradually influenced the region's art, to a limited degree in the third century CE and more extensively thereafter. This trend, evidenced by the finds in the Nile Festival Building, did not remain unchanged or disappear but, rather, spread and established a solid presence in the Byzantine period.

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⁵¹ Dauphin (1979), 30–33.

⁵² Avissar (1996), 169–172; (1999), 41–43.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Lattice pattern of elongated white scales with polychrome rosebuds in their center, decorating one of the carpets found in the Nile Festival Building.
- Fig. 2. Huntress and male warrior depicted in a panel installed next to the conjectured eastern entrance, inside the basilical hall of the Nile Festival Building.
- Fig. 3. Two naked hunters standing beside a tree with a wild boar at their feet; found in a panel located at the other side of the entrance to the basilical hall of the Nile Festival Building.
- Fig. 4. Mosaic with the dancing Amazons found in the building's eastern room.
- Fig. 5. The Nile mosaic.
- Fig. 6. Antioch: Panel depicting the quarrel over the spoils of the Calydonian boar.
- Fig. 7. Antioch: Worcester Hunt mosaic.
- Fig. 8. El-Djem, the Hare Hunt.

FISH-TA(I)LES: JEWISH GOLD-GLASSES REVISITED

Rivka Ben-Sasson

About five hundred gold-glasses have been found in Roman catacombs, either embedded in the sealing mortar of the *loculi* or lying on the ground.¹ The gold-glasses, which carry a gold leaf design adhering to the glass, are the bases of various vessels such as bowls, plates, or cups, usually broken before they were placed in the graves. Incisions were made in the gold leaf to produce the desired design, and the glass was then usually covered by another layer of glass. Of these objects, fifteen have been identified as Jewish, not by the site of discovery, but by the motifs: the menorah, the Holy Ark, and the four species of plants for Succoth.

These elements have been recognized not only as real objects used in synagogue rituals,² but also as motifs that bear eschatological and messianic meaning.³ Some of the gold glasses display symbols unknown elsewhere in Jewish art, such as birds standing on a round object, a torch, and a round table with fish. Whereas the menorah,⁴ the Ark⁵ and the four species⁶ are frequently mentioned in the art history literature, the round table with fish has scarcely been discussed.⁷ Yet, the most unusual iconographic motif found on the gold-glasses is the fish on a

¹ The earliest comprehensive work on the subject is: Garrucci (1858). New evidence shows that this burial custom, once thought to have emerged in Jewish and Christian communities early in the third century, in fact existed in mid first century BC, as attested in the Jewish catacomb of Villa Torlonia. Rutgers, Van der Borg, De Jong and Poole (2005).

² Sukenik (1932), 25; Leon (1960), 221; Fine (2005), 206–214.

³ Wischnitzer-Bernstein (1935), 124.

⁴ Roth (1953), 24–44; Sperber (1967), 135–159; Antecedent and symbolism are discussed in Yarden (1971); Israeli (1998), 40–101.

⁵ Revel-Neher (1984) 71–131; Amit (2000), 231–234.

⁶ Romanoff (1944), 16–21; Revel-Neher (1986–87), 135–146; Kindler (2003), 139–145; Fine (2005), 140–145.

⁷ Two articles deal specifically with the Berlin glass, but they do not focus on this motif: Schmidt (1980), 273–280; Simon (1997), 291–306. Others discuss the fish symbol, but do not take into account the new archaeological and cultural evidence adduced below. Scheftelowitz (1911), 18–53; Goodenough (1953–58), vol. II, 108–118; vol. V, 31–53; Schüler (1966), 48–61; Engemann (1969), 1015–1019.

round table in front of a *stibadium*, a semicircular banqueting couch. The fact that there are similar depictions in pagan and Christian works of art—illuminated manuscripts, sarcophagi, and monumental murals and mosaics—but not on any of almost five hundred gold-glasses uncovered so far, makes the appearance of the fish on Jewish gold-glasses quite striking.

This essay explores this motif in Jewish art in relation to pagan and Christian iconography. Some observations are also included on the presumed original form of the gold-glasses and their use as well as their relation to Jewish ceremonial customs.

The image of the fish and *stibadium* appears together with other motifs on two gold-glasses, each measuring approximately 10 cm in diameter; one is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (Fig. 1) and the other in the Staatliche Museen in Berlin (Fig. 2). The objects show very similar composition and design, and the Berlin glass is almost intact, which may help us to reconstruct the image on the Metropolitan glass.

A horizontal line divides the composition into two registers. The upper register portrays the Holy Ark, doors and curtain open, displaying the Torah scrolls. The Metropolitan glass shows only four scrolls, whereas the one in Berlin has as many as twenty-one.⁸ The designs of the Arks are very much alike: both have a gabled roof with *acroteria*, topped by a round ball. In front of the Berlin Ark is a broad five-step staircase, whereas the glass from the Metropolitan has two thick columns with Corinthian capitals. In both cases two menorot flank the Ark. Near them are additional objects—a shofar on both glasses and an amphora on the Berlin glass. The four species of Succoth figure only on the Berlin glass, but may have been depicted on the missing part of the Metropolitan glass as well. A free-floating scroll and round object are seen on the Metropolitan glass.⁹ The lower register of the Berlin glass contains a *stibadium* and a round table with a fish in front of it. On the Metropolitan glass, a part of a *stibadium* and a table with a fish on it can be seen below the remains of the horizontal line dividing the two

⁸ The reason for the difference in the number of scrolls is not clear. However, it may reflect the reading cycle customary in the Babylonian rite as opposed to the Palestinian one. On the reading cycles, see Shinan (1993), 14–16 (Hebrew).

⁹ The round object is discussed by Goodenough in connection with the fish as a Eucharistic symbol. Goodenough (1953–58), vol. V, 56–58.

registers.¹⁰ Immediately below this line is a kind of a curtain, probably an awning.

Both glasses carry inscriptions. The incomplete inscription on the Metropolitan glass, arranged around the design, reads: *I BIBAS CVM EVLOGIA CONP*. Scholars have offered various readings of this inscription. Goodenough translated it as “drink with blessing,” taking the term *eulogia* (blessing), in its relation to the funerary context. Or, adding several letters: *(C)I BIBAS CVM EVLOGIA CONP(ARI)*, as: “drink with Eulogia your wife.”¹¹ Avery translated it as “drink with praise together.” She proposes a connection to Passover because of the round object which she takes to be a matzo, but does not discuss the other iconographic elements on the glass, such as the fish on the table in front of a *stibadium*.¹²

The inscription under the horizontal line on the Berlin glass reads: *SALBO DOMINO VITALE CVM COIVGE ET FILIOS IPSORV FELIX BENERI V S*. Frey’s translation is still the most generally accepted: “Good health to master Vitalis, his wife and children, from Felix Venerius.”¹³ Goodenough was not sure about *salvo*, and suggested reconstructing it as *salvus*, translated as “delivered.” His interpretation is close to that of Schmidt: “With God’s help will Vitalis, his wife and children be happy, Venerius.” Schmidt thought that the phrase evoked the prayers of the last day of Succoth (Hoshanah Rabbah).¹⁴ Simon, basing her translation on linguistics and sociocultural theories, rejected Schmidt’s version and suggested the following: “The saved master Vitalis, with his wife and children, Felix Benerius.” She further believed that the inscription was meant for a specific occasion, such as a kiddush given in honor of a distinguished guest.¹⁵

The attempts to reconstruct and translate the inscriptions were of course meant to define the original use of the gold-glasses. But they

¹⁰ Although most of the lower register in the Metropolitan glass is missing, it is widely agreed that it depicted a *stibadium* with a table and a fish. In 1949 Goodenough questioned this depiction, without providing an alternative possibility, in correspondence with the Metropolitan Museum’s Byzantine art curator. I am grateful to Ms Helene Evans, the museum’s present curator of Byzantine art for allowing me to see the letter.

¹¹ Goodenough (1953–1958), vol. II, 117.

¹² Avery (1921), 173.

¹³ Frey (1936), vol. I, 382.

¹⁴ Schmidt (1980), 277–278.

¹⁵ Simon (1997), 291–330.

do not yield direct answers to this question, nor do they throw light on the fish on a table in front of the *stibadium*.

Returning to the motif of dining at a *stibadium*, let us consider similar depictions in pagan and Christian art of the third and fourth centuries in Rome. The emergence of this motif can be tentatively dated to the end of the second century; it continued to appear throughout the fourth century and receded toward the sixth century, when it was used in art as an allusion to older, classical times.¹⁶

Almost all the scenes containing this element are associated with funerary art. The earliest known pagan image of people reclining on a *stibadium* appears on a low stone relief from Amitrenum in central Italy, dated to the middle of the first century CE.¹⁷ It is not clear if a fish is depicted on the table. Dunbabin thinks that the image represents a feast, perhaps given in memory of a deceased person. The relief shows two groups, one sitting upright around a table and the other reclining on a *stibadium*.¹⁸ According to Dunbabin the two groups represent two different social classes.¹⁹ Other examples are found in Roman catacombs, such as the mural in the catacomb of Callixtus, dated to the second quarter of the third century CE (Fig. 3).²⁰

There are, however, a few examples that are not connected to burial places. Among them is the big silver plate known as the Sevso plate from the Mildenhall Treasure, dated to the fourth century.²¹ The scene shows a group of people seated on a *stibadium*, dining and drinking around a table with a fish, being attended by servants.

A similar formula illustrates the banquet of Dido and Aeneas in the fifth century *Virgilius Romanus* in the Vatican.²² The banqueting guests are reclining on a *stibadium*; in front of them is a round table on which

¹⁶ Dunbabin (2003), 172.

¹⁷ Ibid., 79–83.

¹⁸ These renderings appear to reflect the popular custom of convivial dining. It seems that the style of such dining changed during the first centuries CE from sitting upright or reclining on a *kline* to reclining on a *stibadium*. Dunbabin believes that the change in convivial dining practices began when entertaining first took place out of doors, and gradually became the way of receiving guests inside the house. Thus although originally meant to be used in an outdoor setting, the *stibadium* entered the home, replacing the traditional *triclinium*. Dunbabin (1996), 66–80.

¹⁹ Dunbabin (2003), 79–83.

²⁰ Ibid., 176.

²¹ Mango and Bennett (1994), 1–12.

²² Vatican City, Bibl. Apost. Vat., Cod. Lat. 3867 (21) fol.100 v. Buonocore (1996), fig. 66

there is a plate with a fish on it, and servants are offering wine. This iconographic formula is followed later in Christian art, for example, on a wall mosaic in the sixth-century basilica of St. Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna. The scene depicts the Last Supper. Christ and the twelve apostles are reclining on a *stibadium*. In front of them is a table with a plate with two fish and six loaves of bread.²³

All these examples feature a fish on a plate. The Sevso plate shows the banquet in a hunting and fishing scene. The picnic setting is emphasized by an awning; the protagonists are seated on cushions filled with foliage (*stibades*, the origin of the term *stibadium*).²⁴ A similar awning also appears on the Metropolitan glass, although there is no obvious association with dining in the open air.

Notwithstanding the similarities of the Jewish gold-glasses and these pagan and Christian scenes, there is a striking difference: neither personages nor wine goblets or other drinking devices are depicted on the Jewish glasses. The absence of people may be due to the wish to avoid the representation of the human figure, as in the wall paintings in the third- or fourth-century Jewish catacomb of Villa Torlonia or on the fourth-century Jewish gold-glass preserved in the Israel Museum, which depicts birds and lions.²⁵ But the absence of wine goblets is surprising, considering that the scene is based on convivial dining²⁶ and appears on early Christian objects in the context of biblical iconography. An example of such imagery is the scene on the fourth-century Brescia casket of Moses feasting in Jethro's house, reclining on a *stibadium*, with a fish before him, with the guests being served wine from a pitcher.²⁷

What further distinguishes the Jewish gold-glasses from the pagan and Christian examples is the juxtaposition of the *stibadium* fish banquet with common Jewish symbols, such as the Torah shrine, menorot, and the four species. The association of the *stibadium* element with the Jewish symbols influences one's understanding of the scene.

²³ Bustacchini (1990), 112, fig. 1.

²⁴ Scenes depicting cushions appear in other representations of outdoor feasts, as in the Piazza Armerina mosaic. Carandini, Ricci, and De Vos. (1982), 175–187, fig. 94, pl. XXIV; cf. Dunbabin (1996), 76, n. 41.

²⁵ Israel Museum, inv. no. 66.36.15. Israeli (2001), (cat. no. 462), 331 (Hebrew).

²⁶ The Latin term *convivium*, “living together,” replaced the Greek *symposium*, “drinking together.” Dunbabin (2003), 12–13; 192–193: The servants and the wine are also absent in some Christian catacomb paintings. Ibid., 176–177.

²⁷ Another *stibadium* scene appears on the Brescia casket, depicting the Israelites feasting and being served wine after constructing the Golden Calf. Tkacz (2002), 102, and figs. 6, 7.

Various explanations have been offered for the appearance of banquet scenes in a Jewish context. Some scholars have suggested that the Jewish gold-glasses depict the Sabbath meal.²⁸ Kohl and Watzinger, as well as Sukenik, argued that the *stibadium* represents the synagogue, where the Elders are seated before the Ark in a semicircle.²⁹ More specifically, they proposed that a special festive meal could have taken place in the synagogue with the participants sitting in a semicircular arrangement. Kohl and Watzinger further claimed that they found remains of such a structure in the Kfar Nahum synagogue. Thus wine goblets would have been used for this meal.

To this can be added the semicircular structure in the fourth-century synagogue of Sardis (Fig. 4),³⁰ which might plausibly have served for this kind of feast. However, it is unlikely that the design on the gold-glasses was based on synagogue architecture since other, earlier, pagan and Christian models, such as the catacomb wall paintings discussed above, were already in existence in Rome.

Leitzman argued that the Jewish gold-glasses were the bases of wine goblets used for the special remembrance/mourning meals (common in the pagan world for reunion with the dead, that is, the *agape*, or the *refrigerium*)³¹ Other scholars associated such goblets with a specific feast, such as Passover in the case of the Metropolitan gold-glass,³² or Hoshanah Rabbah (the seventh day of Succoth), in the case of the Berlin gold-glass.³³

To discuss the different layers of meaning, let us look at biblical, early Jewish, and pagan written sources relating to fish, and the various meanings they convey. Fish are mentioned in various contexts. Their importance as a Sabbath dish is stressed in the Mishna³⁴ and in later Talmudic literature. The Sabbath tractate of the Babylonian Talmud, for example, records the legend of a certain Joseph, who bought a big fish for the Sabbath. As a reward for honoring the holy day, he found a large pearl in the fish, sold it, and became a rich man.³⁵ Midrash Genesis Rabbah, edited during the fourth century, gives a list of the basic

²⁸ Scheftelowitz (1911), 34; Cohn-Wiener (1929), 132.

²⁹ Kohl and Watzinger (1916), 141–143; Sukenik (1932), 19.

³⁰ Levine (1990), 36–84 (Hebrew).

³¹ Beyer and Leitzman (1930), 23.

³² Avery (1921), 173.

³³ Schmidt (1980), 278.

³⁴ *Mishnah Beitza* 2:1; Neusner (1988), *Besah* 293.

³⁵ Babylonian Talmud, Tractate *Sabbath* 119a. Epstein, *Seder Moed* (1938), 58.

things that should be prepared for the Sabbath: filling a barrel of water, grilling a fish to honor the day, and lighting a candle.³⁶

In the Mishnah we find a conceptual connection between the Sabbath meal and the messianic era. The sages refer to Psalm 92, which the Levites used to sing in the Temple on the Sabbath, as a notion of resting on the Sabbath as on the eternal Sabbath, the eschatological era.³⁷

The association of fish with the End of Days is biblical. Fishes are mentioned in Ezekiel, who prophesies that the Dead Sea will be full of them, indicating that the nature of things will change for the better (47:9–11).³⁸ The eschatological dimension of fish is followed through in detail by the sages in the Babylonian Talmud. Some of them refer to the banquet prepared from the Leviathan (the big fish) that will be served to the righteous in Paradise: God will make the righteous a tabernacle from its skin.³⁹ Although the Leviathan is not really a fish and thus is not suitable in terms of the Jewish dietary restrictions, the sages refer to it as kosher.⁴⁰ Thus the fish or Leviathan, associated with the eschatological era through Ezekiel's vision and the Midrash, led some scholars to explain the meaning of the fish on the Jewish gold-glasses as an eschatological symbol.⁴¹

The custom of Roman Jews of serving fish at the Sabbath meal is known from pagan sources. Thus, for example, Persius (34–62 CE) includes the Jews in his fifth satire, which mocks those who think themselves free of superstition. Among others, he makes fun of the Jewish custom of placing a tunny tail on a red plate during Sabbath:

But when Herod's birthday comes round, when the lamps wreathed with violets and ranged round the greasy window-sills have spat forth their thick clouds of smoke, when the floppy tunnies' tails are curled round the dishes of red ware, and the white jars are swollen with wine, you silently twitch your lips, turning pale at the Sabbath of the circumcised.⁴²

³⁶ Midrash Genesis Rabbah, 72:4; Epstein, 664.

³⁷ *Mishnah, Tamid*, 7:4; Neusner (1988), 862.

³⁸ Resembling in a way the well-known prophecy of Isaiah (11:6) about the change in the nature of animals: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb."

³⁹ Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Batra* 75a. Epstein (1938), *Seder Kodashim*, 299.

⁴⁰ Babylonian Talmud, *Hulin* 67b. Epstein (1938), *Seder Moed*, 364. In later Jewish art the Leviathan is portrayed as a big, sometimes a monstrous, fish, which becomes a symbol of the messianic era, e.g., the illustration for Succoth in the Ambrosian Bible (Milan, Ambrosian Library, Ms.B. 32, INF, fol. 136); Wischnitzer-Bernstein (1936), 339–380.

⁴¹ Revel-Neher (1984), 65; Schmidt (1980), 227–228; Schüler (1966), 48–61.

⁴² Persius, Satire V, 180–184; Ramsay (1963), 386–389.

The fish is also linked to a Jewish mourning custom—the *Havra'a*, a special meal with wine offered to mourners immediately after the funeral. The custom is mentioned in the Bible: “and all the people came to cause David to eat...”;⁴³ and “neither shall men tear themselves for them in mourning, to comfort them for the dead; neither shall men give them the cup of consolation to drink for their father or for their mother.”⁴⁴ Some six hundred years later Flavius Josephus refers to this custom. He recounts that Archileus, Herod’s son, gave a feast for all the people after the seven days mourning for his father. Josephus points out that this was a very important Jewish custom, observed by all social classes.⁴⁵ Fish are mentioned only once in the Talmud, in connection with the special mourning meal, not as the only dish to be served at that meal, but included among the offered fare.⁴⁶

It was customary to drink wine during the mourning ceremony: ten cups followed special blessings, from the funeral to the mourning meal. We read about this in both the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmuds.⁴⁷ The number of cups of wine and the exact order of the blessings changed over the first three centuries CE; at first ten cups were required, but by the time of Rav Hai Gaon in the twelfth century the number was reduced to one.⁴⁸ This is evidence that the number of cups was reduced because the custom resulted in too much merriment during a time devoted to condolence.⁴⁹

Pagan and Christian depictions of repasts with fish, such as in the *Virgilius Romanus* or the catacomb paintings, probably reflect accepted practice and the social order. Fish, which was considered a luxury food,⁵⁰ figured in the *agape* banquet, where the offerings for the dead included wine, cakes, bread, oil, eggs, and fruit.⁵¹ Among Christians,

⁴³ II Samuel 3:35.

⁴⁴ Jeremiah 16:7.

⁴⁵ Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*, II, 1–3; Thackeray (1956), 323.

⁴⁶ Babylonian Talmud, *Masekhtot Ktanot*, *Semakhot*, 14, 13 (Hebrew).

⁴⁷ Babylonian Talmud, *Ktubot* 8b; *Seder Nashim*, 37–38; Jerusalem Talmud, *Brakhot* 6a. Guggenheimer (2000).

⁴⁸ For a comprehensive discussion of the exact blessings, their number and order, see Rubin (1997), 223–233 (Hebrew).

⁴⁹ The same problem was encountered by the Church Father Tertullian (155–230 CE), who banned the *agape* meals for the dead for the same reason. Tertullian, *De testim. anime* 4; cf. Cumont (1922), 55.

⁵⁰ Pliny, *Natural History* 9,104; Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 3,116; cf. Purcell (1995), 136–137.

⁵¹ Jensen (2000), 56.

the fish banquet was interpreted as the Eucharist or as the miracle of the loaves and fish.⁵²

How then does the motif of the fish and the *stibadium* throw light on the original use of the Jewish gold-glasses and their function in the catacombs? In order to answer this question, let us inquire briefly into the initial shape of the gold-glasses. Many glasses, whether Jewish, pagan, or Christian, bear the inscription *PIE ZESES*, which means “live and drink.” This inscription, a Latin version of the Greek terminology used in the *symposium*, has led some scholars to assume that all gold-glasses were the bases of goblets and drinking vessels, or else medallions.⁵³

Both Dan Barag and Joseph Engemann partially reject this opinion. Considering the shape of the broken bases, they concluded that many of the gold-glasses were parts of shallow bowls.⁵⁴ Basing her research in the Roman catacombs on the shape and context of the gold-glasses, Stephanie Leigh Smith also came to the conclusion that most of the glasses with a rimmed base were originally parts of shallow bowls.⁵⁵ The only intact gold-glass vessel—the so-called Alexander plate, now in the Cleveland Museum of Art—that does not have the *PIE ZESES* inscription is indeed shaped as a shallow bowl, and no intact goblet with a gold-glass base has been found,⁵⁶ which supports the suggestion that some, if not many, of the surviving gold-glass fragments were the bases of shallow bowls. As the gold-glasses with the fish meal design do not bear the inscription, we can assume that they were not wine goblets.

It has been suggested that the gold-glasses were intended to identify a burial place in the catacombs, since they glittered in the dark.⁵⁷ However, this is not likely, as many of them bear an almost identical design, making the task of distinguishing among them from distance nearly impossible. Moreover, many gold-glasses were placed too high to be recognized in the dim light of the catacomb, and some of them were laid in graves identifying the deceased by means of inscriptions.⁵⁸

⁵² Cf. Matt. 14:13–21; 15:32–39; Mark 6:34–44; 8:1–10; 14–20; Luke 9:11–17; John 6: 5–13.

⁵³ Kisa (1908), 861–864; Garrucci sketched a broken goblet and a shallow plate after Boldetti ([1864]); cf. Engemann (1968–69), 7.

⁵⁴ Barag (1971), vol. 7, 607; Engemann (1968–69), 9–10.

⁵⁵ Smith (2000), 51.

⁵⁶ Cooney (1969), 253–261.

⁵⁷ Aus'm Weerth (1878), 99–114; cf. Engemann (1968–69), 7. To add to the confusion, there is at least one glass with an explicit funerary inscription, and it is Jewish; Schwabe and Reifenberg (1935), 341–346.

⁵⁸ Smith (2000), 190.

It has also been suggested that the gold-glasses were either apotropaic or served as a mark of the deceased's faith.⁵⁹

I offer a different explanation and suggest that the two Jewish gold-glasses discussed here were actually shallow bowls for serving fish. Archaeological evidence shows that during the first centuries of the common era wine goblets were abundant, whereas toward the third and fourth centuries there were fewer of them, but more large shallow bowls, used for serving or for display. Good examples are the first-century silver cups discovered in the house of Menander in Pompeii and in the treasure of Boscoreale, as opposed to the fourth-century huge silver plates, excavated from the graves in Sevso and at Kaiseraugst in Switzerland.⁶⁰ To these may be added the fourth-century gold-glass Alexander plate mentioned above, still intact.

If we add together the allusions to the *Havra'a*, the Sabbath and messianic meals, the pieces of evidence—Jewish and Roman writings such as Josephus and Persius' satire and the archeological finds—that contradict the supposition that the gold-glasses were wine goblets, we may come to the conclusion that our gold-glasses were the bases of serving plates and not of wine cups. We can assume that such gold-glass plates were most probably intended for serving fish, considered a luxury and an aristocratic dish. To this we may most probably connect the representation of fish on a plate in front of a *stibadium*, a common convention for representing upper-class dining among Christians as well as pagans and Jews.⁶¹ As a luxury dish, it could be suitable for a Sabbath meal or other Jewish feasts, such as the day before Yom Kippur. Thus, for example, a legend tells about a tailor in Rome bargaining with a servant of the Roman governor over the last fish left in the market. Finally the Jew bought it for a very high price, in order to honor the holy day of Yom Kippur. He was rewarded with a precious pearl that he found inside the fish.⁶²

The gold-glass plates could have been used during the mourning repast, whether belonging to the household or brought by friends. We read in the Talmud that there was a change in the way friends carried wine to the mourners. In early times rich people brought wine in "white glass" (probably transparent), whereas poor people carried it in colored

⁵⁹ Elsner (1998), 233.

⁶⁰ Dunbabin (2003), 162.

⁶¹ Ibid., 196–198.

⁶² *Genesis Rabbah* 11: 4; Epstein (1951), 83.

glass. In order not to shame the poor people, it was proclaimed that everybody should bring wine to mourners in colored glass.⁶³

Another possibility is that the plates could have been given as gifts on important occasions, such as the Roman New Year. The custom of receiving Roman *strenae*—special coins for good wishes—on the Roman New Year probably reached the Jewish upper classes.⁶⁴ Thus, for example, the Talmud discusses whether it is appropriate for the patriarch Rabbi Yehudah to receive coins from a Gentile on this occasion.⁶⁵

Alternatively, the plates could have been wedding gifts,⁶⁶ an assumption based on the fish motif, which is a symbol of fertility. The Talmud notes that the preferred wedding day is Thursday, the day fishes were created and were blessed: “Be fruitful, and multiply” (Genesis 1:22).⁶⁷

In conclusion, the depiction of the fish and the *stibadium* motifs, unusual in Jewish art, may be read on two levels. The more obvious level reflects either rituals such as those on the Sabbath or on the day before Yom Kippur, taking place in the home, or communal and public rituals performed in the synagogue. The second, eschatological, level, is emphasized by the association with the messianic meal and the mythological fish, the Leviathan. Although the messianic banquet will reward the righteous individually, the eschatological era will redeem the nation as a whole.

The well-known Jewish symbolical elements—the Ark, the shofar, and the four species—represent not only remembrance of the past, but also hope for the future, when the Temple will be rebuilt. The Jewish symbols juxtaposed to the fish and the *stibadium* on the gold-glasses allude to the legendary past, when the Temple still stood, magnificent in its splendor: the golden menorah lit day and night, the amphora that contained pure olive oil for the candles, the four species and the shofar, all part of the Temple rite, that became a part of synagogue ritual after the destruction.⁶⁸

⁶³ Babylonian Talmud, Moed Katan, 3: 27a; Epstein (1938), 177.

⁶⁴ Babylonian Talmud, Avoda Zarah, 6b; Epstein, 27.

⁶⁵ Blidstein (1972), 150–152.

⁶⁶ Engemann (1968–69), 10. More specifically on the use of certain objects in Jewish wedding and mourning customs, see the discussion by Glick (1997) (Hebrew).

⁶⁷ Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot, 5a; Epstein (1938), 15.

⁶⁸ E.g., the benediction of the four species was performed for seven days only in the Temple. After the destruction, it was done for seven days throughout the country, and not only on the first day. This was only one of Rabi Yohanan Ben Zakai's amendments; Mishnah, Rosh Hashannah, 4–3; Neusner (1988), 305.

The accumulative meaning of the various symbols on the Jewish gold-glasses suggests that they functioned as a reminder of the spiritual value of the vessel at a given ceremonial event. This may explain the deliberate breaking of the gold-glass vessel after the death of the person who owned it and its placement in the grave,⁶⁹ both as a personal possession⁷⁰ and a commemoration of the values of Jewish life.⁷¹

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⁶⁹ In fact many of the gold-glasses were found embedded in the mortar that sealed the *cubiculum*, the depository of the corpse. Others were found on the floor. A few can still be seen in situ, such as the broken bowl in the fourth-century catacomb of Pamphilus; Mancinelli (1998), 48. It was traditionally assumed that the glasses broke when collectors of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries tried to extract them; however, it is now believed that in most cases they were deliberately broken before being embedded in the mortar; some fragments were even smoothed in advance; Engemann (1968–69), 11–12; Barag (1981), 99.

⁷⁰ All kinds of small personal items, such as combs, coins, dolls, etc., are known to have been placed in the mortar of Christian and pagan catacombs; Mancinelli (1998); cf. Barag (1981), 99.

⁷¹ For a similar Jewish funerary custom, utilizing certain personal ceremonial items, see Glick (1997), 131–139; 45–147.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Jewish gold-glass. Roman catacomb (unknown origin) fourth century, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
- Fig. 2. Jewish gold-glass. Rome, probably the Jewish catacomb of Vignia Randanini, fourth century, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Frühchristlich-byzantinische Sammlung.
- Fig. 3. Eucharistic banquet. Catacomb of Callixtus, Rome, wall painting, second quarter of the third century.
- Fig. 4. Sardis synagogue, ground plan, third to fourth century.

JEWISH ART IN LATE ANTIQUITY AN EXAMPLE OF JEWISH IDENTITY

Kurt Schubert (d. Feb. 4, 2007)*

Prior to discussing several works of art from the Talmudic period as phenomena demonstrating the constancy of Jewish identity, two issues have to be addressed: the development of Jewish identity in exile and the expressions of this identity in the context of Hellenistic culture.

The Judeans that were deported first in 598 BCE and then in 587 BCE and brought to Babylonia became a Jewish people in exile that characterized itself as the legitimate representative of the twelve tribes. That this was the case is made clear in the Book of Ezra (6:17) in its description of the consecration of the Second Temple in 515 BCE. The returning exiles offered “twelve he-goats” as “a purification offering for all Israel...corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel,”¹ even though the ten northern tribes were lost during the Assyrian conquest in 722 BCE. Most of the population of these tribes had assimilated into the pagan environment. The Book of Tobit mentions exiled Israelites belonging to the ten tribes of the North who remained faithful, but the image that emerges from this account suits rather the ideology of the Judeans after the deuteronomist reform. Evidence for the idea of an integration of exiled Israelites with exiled Judeans is found also in Ezra 37:15–28 and Jeremiah 50:4. In tannaic scholarship, on the other hand, R. Akiva and R. Eliezer ben Hyrkanos discuss the question of the fate of the northern tribes, the former believing in their future return and the latter not.

The question is thus, what made the identity of the two remaining tribes so enduring. The destruction of the northern tribes occurred about 100 years prior to the deuteronomist reform. According to Deuteronomy 26:17–19 the Covenant God made with Israel is understood as a mutual

* Kurt Schubert submitted a draft of his contribution a few months before he died on February 4, 2007. The draft, in German, did not contain any references and footnotes. While translating his article, the editors attempted to provide the text with essential footnotes; these, however, are not complete.

¹ English translations from the Bible are based on *The Oxford Study Bible* (1976).

agreement with obligation on both sides. Deuteronomy 7:6 reads: "...for you are a people holy to the Lord your God, and He has chosen you out of all peoples on earth to be His special possession."

Another factor can be found in the social structure created by the exiled Judeans, which enabled them to develop their own strong sense of identity in the Babylonian diaspora. Only the upper classes were deported, whereas the uneducated lower classes were left behind. Moreover, the deported Judeans were settled in a closed community. According to Ezra 1:1, they lived near the River Kebar, most likely a great artificial canal built for irrigation purposes. Jeremiah 29:1–14, a letter to the exiled Judeans, indicates that the exiled could perform their religious rites unmolested and created a community with well-defined religious forms and communal identity.

Owing to this new kind of communal and religious identity in exile some of the Judeans preferred to remain in Babylonia after Cyrus's edict in 539 BCE, rather than to return to their country of origin. Most likely economic and political circumstances account for this phenomenon. After 450 BCE two personalities of major importance come onto the scene, Ezra and Nehemia. Ezra, a priest, is referred to in Ezra 7:12 as "scribe learned in the law of the God of heaven," most likely indicating a religious official of high rank within the Persian administration. He may have represented a social group that had spread all over the Persian Empire. Nehemia, on the other hand, was elevated from the position of royal butler to governor of Judea.

That the administration of the Jewish communities in Babylonia was structured in a way that enabled the Jews to create strong communal ties can be discerned from Jeremiah 29:1: "Jeremiah sent a letter from Jerusalem to the elders who were left among the exiles, to the priests, prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had deported from Jerusalem to Babylon." According to Ezra 8:1 there also was a Council of Elders, mentioned again in Ezra 14:1: "Some of the Elders of Israel visited me;" and in Ezra 20:1: "On the tenth day of the fifth month in the seventh year, some of the Elders of Israel came to consult God and were sitting with me."

These communities developed a new approach to salvation and a new understanding of the law, as it later became manifest in the Priestly Source. Communities developed with a shared socio-religious structure. Following Genesis 2:3, the Sabbath rest was considered immanent to the order of Creation. From Genesis 9:4, the prohibition against

consuming blood was understood as part of the basic law of mankind. The circumcision as described in Genesis 17 became a symbol of the Covenant. For pre- and postexilic Jews observing the Sabbath rest was tantamount to following the basic laws of nature; performing ritual slaughter meant observing the Noahide laws for mankind; and the circumcision was a means of distinguishing themselves from the other nations, the *ummot ha'olam*.

The first chapter of the Bible clearly indicates that the celestial luminaries, worshipped in Babylon as gods, were created by God. Ezra 1 describes a divine vision of the prophet Ezekiel, similar to the one experienced earlier by Isaiah in the Temple in Jerusalem (Isa. 6:1–4). This parallel was taken to mean that not only the Land of Israel is an inheritance from God, but that it was the God of Israel who created the entire world, so God could be worshipped anywhere. Sabbath rest, dietary laws (*kashrut*), and circumcision served to create a clear distinction between the community of Jews and the pagans of the larger society. The servants of the One True God (Ex. 20:3) became the sole true servants of God, and the line that separated them from other peoples informed and perpetuated Jewish identity.

Nevertheless, there were tendencies among the Jews of Babylonia that, for several reasons, can be described as some sort of “proto-Zionism.” Despite various possibilities of integration within Babylonian society there was always the wish to return to Zion—*shivat tsion*. Psalm 137:3 refers to the Babylonians as “captors,” and the great prophetic book of the exile, Second Isaiah describes Babylon as a “furnace of affliction (Isa. 48:10).” The main cause for distress among the exiled Judeans was the fact that they were being exposed to idolatry. Jeremiah 50:38 makes it clear: “...for it is a land of idols that glories in its dreaded gods.” It is against this background of idolatry that Psalm 137 should be understood: “By the rivers of Babylon we sat down and wept as we remembered Zion... How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land? If I forget you Jerusalem, may my right hand wither away; let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you,... Babylon, the destroyer, happy is he who repays you for what you did to us!”

Thus there were several determining factors in the development of a strong feeling of exilic identity: a lack of freedom, a certain degree of homeland nostalgia, and an awareness of living in an unclean land whose idolatry constantly affronts the true God. This exilic identity enabled the Jews to exist and maintain their separateness outside of the

Land of Israel. It engendered an everlasting hope of return, which could eventually evolve into an element of messianic expectation.

The course of history ceased to be viewed as a sequence of political changes, but history took on a metaphysical dimension. In the eyes of the prophets, the course of history depends first of all on Israel's success in fulfilling its part of the Covenant, that is, on Israel's faithfulness to God, a thought that pervades the Book of Deuteronomy and deuteronomistic historiography. Punishment is never God's last word; it possesses an educative function to guide the failing nation back to its roots. In Leviticus 26:25 this is referred to as follows: "I shall bring the sword against you to avenge the Covenant." This stubborn people had developed into a nation that defined its identity through its distinction from its environment by obeying its ritual laws.

This Israelocentric view of history turned all enemies of Babylon into liberators sent by God. Jeremiah 50:2–3, for example, reads: "Declare among the nations, make proclamation; keep nothing back, spread the news; Babylon is taken, Bel put to shame, Marduk dismayed; the idols of Babylon are put to shame, her false gods are dismayed. A nation has come out of the north against her; it will make her land a desolate waste with no one living there..." Yet more explicitly this view is expressed by Second Isaiah (Isa. 44:28–45:4): "I said to Cyrus: 'You will be my shepherd to fulfill all my purpose, so that Jerusalem may be rebuilt and the foundations of the Temple be laid,'" referring to Cyrus's victory over Kroises of Lydia in 546 BCE and the conquest of Babylonia in 539 BCE.

This is the turning point—the point at which the awareness of being the Chosen People developed into a theology of history. History became the stage on which God judges Israel and grants mercy. Israel in the midst of the nations fulfills a central role in the eschatological history of salvation. This becomes particularly clear in the context of the "Empire of Exile," referring to the Roman Empire. However successful the Romans would be in their endeavors, Israel is superior in its truthful faith in God. The Babylonian Talmud reports an episode in which R. Judah ben Ilai, R. Yosse ben Halafta, and R. Simon ben Yohai are conversing with a proselyte by the name of Judah. R. Judah ben Ilai praised the success of the Romans, their streets and plazas, their bridges and baths, no doubt achievements of considerable respectability. R. Simon ben Yohai, however, offers a different view: bridges were erected in order to have a reason to collect taxes; the streets are filled with their prostitutes, and

the bathhouses were built for their own amusement. For the sake of God the Romans did nothing.²

*Hellenistic Syncretism as a Hermeneutic Means toward an
Emphasis of Identity*

As early as in the writings of Josephus Flavius,³ as well as in the corresponding rabbinic tradition, the story of Moses' infancy describes Moses as *theios aner*, a man, conceived from the beginning as the liberator by the wish of God. Josephus reports that an Egyptian scholar foresaw the birth of such an infant from the midst of the Hebrews and warned Pharaoh that he would strengthen Israel and destroy Egypt. Following upon this prophecy, Pharaoh gave orders to kill all newborn male Israelites.

God told Moses' father, Amram, that it was his son's birth that was foretold, but that Moses would be saved. Owing to divine intervention Moses' birth was "easy and without severe labor and was not revealed to the Pharaonic spies." Moses, being hidden in the Nile, was discovered by Thermutis, Pharaoh's daughter (rabbinic tradition names her Bithia), who had the infant fetched by a person who could swim. According to the rabbinic account, it was Pharaoh's daughter herself who took the infant out of the water. She had gone down to the river to cleanse herself from leprosy or—following another variant—from the idolatry that prevailed in her father's house. Moses, already observing the ritual laws of *kashrut* and refusing the milk of an idolatrous wetnurse, was sent back to be cared for by his own mother until he was weaned. Thermutis, who was childless, adopted this child of "divine appearance." She showed him to her father, who put his crown on the child's head. In a moment of playfulness Moses cast the crown onto the floor. The Egyptian scholar, mentioned earlier in the story, realized the implications and demanded that Moses be killed. Pharaoh, however, guided by God, refused to kill the child.

² *Babylonian Talmud*, *Shabbat* 33b; for an English translation, see Epstein (1938), vol. 2, pt. 1, 154–158.

³ *Antiquitates* 2:9,2–7; for an English translation, see Feldman (2000), 195.

According to the rabbinic version, it was Moses himself who put on Pharaoh's crown. The role of the Egyptian scholar is played by three counselors, Jethro, Job, and Bileam:

We are afraid of this [child] who took away your crown and put it on his own head. It could be that he is the one of whom we warned you, that he will deprive you of your rulership. Some said he should be killed; others proposed to burn him. Jethro was amongst them and said this child does not do anything out of intention. Let us test him; bring before him a dish with gold and one with glowing coal. Should he stretch out his arm to reach the gold we shall know that he acts with intention. Should he reach for the coal, we shall know that he does not act with intention and we should not execute him. [The dishes] were brought before him and Moses reached out to take the gold. Gabriel came and moved his hand to reach for the glowing coal. He took the coal to his mouth and burnt his tongue. Therefore 'he was slow of speech and tongue' (Ex. 4:10)⁴

This view of Moses as *theios aner* also served to answer the claims of Roman anti-Judaism with regard to the absence of idols, ritual separation, xenophobia, and lack of culture. Apollonius Molon, for example, claimed that the laws given by Moses guided the Jews to evil instead of virtue. He described the Jews as "the most uneducated of all barbarians," unable to offer any useful invention.⁵ Jewish apologists at times replied by means of exaggerations. Moses, said Aristobul, lived before the Greek philosophers; therefore, he concluded, Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato studied the Torah. According to another Jewish apologist, Artapan, Egyptian culture was based entirely on the teachings of Moses. Eupolemus credited Moses with the invention of script. A similar image of Moses arises from the writings of Philon of Alexandria in the first century of the Common Era:

Teachers at once arrived from different parts, some unbidden from the neighboring countries and the provinces of Egypt, others summoned from Greece under promise of high reward. But in a short time he advanced beyond their capacities; his gifted nature forestalled their instruction, so that his seemed a case rather of recollection than of learning, and indeed he himself devised and propounded problems which they could not easily solve.⁶

⁴ *Exodus Rabbah*, par. 1:26 on Ex. 2:10; Shinan (1984), 82.

⁵ Josephus Flavius, *Contra Apionem* 2:14; Thackeray (1926), vol. 1, 351.

⁶ Philo of Alexandria, *De vita Mosis* 1:21; Colson and Whitaker (1962), vol. 6, 286–287.

And elsewhere:

And therefore it seems that some Grecian legislators did well when they copied from the most sacred tables of Moses the enactment that hearing is not accepted as evidence....⁷

According to the Book of Proverbs (8:22f), God created the world by using Wisdom, identified later, in the rabbinic tradition, with the Torah:

The Torah speaks: "I was the work-plan of the Holy One, blessed be He." In the accepted practice of the world, when a mortal king builds a palace, he does not build it out of his own head, but he follows a work-plan. And [the one who supplies] the work-plan does not build out of his own head, but he has designs and diagrams, so as to know how to situate the rooms and the doorways. Thus the Holy One, blessed be He, consulted the Torah when He created the world. So the Torah stated: 'By means of "the beginning" did God create... (Gen. 1:1). And the word for "beginning" refers only to the Torah, as Scripture says, "the Lord made me as the beginning of his way."' (Prov. 8:22)⁸

Similarly, Philon refers to an *exemplum* about a master builder,⁹ according to which only the Jews are true cosmopolitans, since only their lives correspond to the order that underlies the Creation. The separation of Jews from other peoples is the basis of their eschatological and cosmic relevance.

Jewish Imagery: Syncretism and Identity

A particularly clear expression of Moses as God's chosen redeemer, as *theios aner*, appears in a mural (dated to 244–245 CE) on the western wall of the synagogue in Dura Europos in modern Syria (Fig. 1).¹⁰ To the right, a city wall with tower and gate represents Egypt. To the left is an image of Pharaoh in Parthian costume seated on a throne, flanked by a scribe and a counselor. The latter is pointing at two women, who are

⁷ Philo of Alexandria, *De specialibus legibus* 4:61, *ibid.*, vol. 8, 44–47.

⁸ *Bereshit Rabbah*, par. 1, Theodor and Albeck (1965), 1–14; for an English translation, see Neusner (1985), vol. 1, 1–20.

⁹ Philo of Alexandria, *De opificio mundi* 16–20; Colson and Whitaker (1962), vol. 1, 14–17 for an English version, see Runia (2001), 50–51.

¹⁰ For a publication of all the murals from the synagogue of Dura Europos, see Goodenough (1968).

talking—a depiction of the midwives explaining that the Israelite women give birth fast and easily, delivering before the arrival of a midwife, so that Pharaoh's order to kill the male newborns cannot be carried out. In front of them in a scene, now almost entirely destroyed, a woman is hiding an infant in the reeds. At the far left Moses' discovery is illustrated: the nude princess holding the infant, the small basket for the child nearby. With her right arm she points at two women whose appearance is identical to that of the midwives at the right of the mural.

Late antique rabbinic interpretation explains the midwives' failure to kill the newborn Israelites with the narrative addition that identifies them with Moses' mother and sister.¹¹ Similarly, the nude figure of the princess standing in the water corresponds to the rabbinic understanding of the Biblical text in Exodus 2:5: "She reached out with the arm (*ammatah*)."¹² In the background three handmaidens can be seen, with various utensils in their hands. These utensils, especially the conch on the right associates the women with nymphs, often shown at birth scenes of Greco-Roman heroes and typical of a *theios aner*. A mosaic showing the birth of Alexander the Great in the National Museum of Beirut illustrates this iconography. A similar reference to the iconography of a Greek *theios aner* can be observed in Moses' rod shown as Hercules' club. Moses, however, does not play only the role of a Greek hero, but is also a savior and a mediator for the divine law.

The Torah, considered the divine law given by God to His people, was to be the sign of Israel's closeness to God and thus the sign of chosenness.¹³ This idea finds clear expression in two murals in the (Christian?) catacomb at the fourth-century Via Latina in Rome (Figs. 2 and 3).¹⁴ This is not the place to elaborate on the question of whether the patrons were Christians and what their interpretation of the theophany on Mount Sinai (especially in the version in Cubiculum O) may have been. But it can be assumed that the images were drawn after a Jewish pictorial model. In both versions, the first found in Cubiculum C and the second

¹¹ *Babylonian Talmud*, *Sota* 11b, for an English translation, see Epstein (1938), vol. 3, pt. 6, 56–57; Aramaic targumim on Ex. 1:15; for English translations, see Drazin (1990), 36–43; Maher (1994), 162; *ibid.*, 13.

¹² *Babylonian Talmud*, *Sota* 12b, for an English translation, see Epstein (1938), vol. 3, pt. 6, 62–68; *Exodus Rabbah* par. 1:23 on Ex. 2:5; Shinan (1984), 75.

¹³ *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, *Bahodesh* 5 on Ex. 20:2, Lauterbach with English translation (1933), vol. 2, 229–237.

¹⁴ Ferrua (1991).

in Cubiculum O, the Sinai revelation is put into a programmatic context with the depiction of the Crossing of the Red Sea.

The mural in Cubiculum O pictures Moses larger than the rest of the Israelites, again, a clear reference to his identification as *theios aner*. In the version in Cubiculum C, Mount Sinai is shown as a small tempietto hovering in the air with seven steps leading up to it, a detail that can be understood only against the background of rabbinic exegesis. In front of the mountain Moses is imaged guiding the Israelites, some of them shown with bundles containing the unleavened dough “The people picked up their dough before it was leavened, wrapped their kneading troughs in their cloaks and slung them on their shoulders (Ex. 12:34).” Numerous rabbinic traditions create a parallel among the heavenly ladder, Zion, and Sinai. One of the texts explains that the words “ladder” (*sulam*) and “Sinai” have the same numerical value 130.¹⁵ Another text elaborates on the origins of Mount Sinai:

Whence did Sinai come? R. Jose taught: Out of Mount Moriah, out of the place where our father Isaac had been bound as a sacrifice, Sinai plucked itself as a priest's portion is plucked out of the bread. For the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Since their father Isaac was bound upon this place, it is fitting that his children receive the Torah upon it.¹⁶

In Cubiculum C, the Sinai scene is adjacent to a depiction of the Binding of Isaac. According to several references from the *Hekhalot* literature, the seven steps leading to the tempietto can be interpreted as the seven firmaments that lead to the vision of God.

Both images show Moses in the upper part of the mural, on a cloud facing the Hand of God and receiving the tablets of the law. In both Moses is standing next to the clouds and the column of fire. Another rabbinic text elucidates the background of these pictorial details: “At the time that Moses was to go up on high, a cloud came and lay down in front of him. Moses did not know whether he was to mount it or to take hold of it. Thereupon the mouth of the cloud flew open and he entered it... And the cloud covered Moses and carried him up.”¹⁷ However, the two images do not correspond fully. The most striking

¹⁵ *Genesis Rabbah* par. 68:2 on Gen. 28:12f, Theodor and Albeck (1965), vol. 2, 770; Neusner (1985), vol. 3, 1–2.

¹⁶ *Midrash Tehillim* on Ps 68:15, Buber (1890), 320; for an English translation, see Braude (1959), vol. 1, 544.

¹⁷ *Pesiqta Rabbati* 20:4, Ish-Shalom (1963), 96, for an English translation, see Braude (1968), vol. 1, 405.

difference between them is the addition of the figure of Lazarus at the entrance to the tempietto in Cubiculum O, which gives this imagery a focus on the Christian theme of salvation. In the version in Cubiculum C, the Binding of Isaac is shown next to the Sinai revelation, whereas Cubiculum O juxtaposes it with a depiction of Daniel in the Lions' Den. The Daniel theme is very common in early Christian funerary art and represents the hope for salvation.¹⁸ I thus suggest that this particular mural is the outcome of a Christian reinterpretation of an originally Jewish pictorial model.

The mural above the Torah shrine in the synagogue in Dura-Europos constitutes another case that demonstrates the centrality of divine law in the eyes of the Jewish people. In the following I refer only to the original layer of paint and not to the subsequent changes and additions (Figs. 4 and 5). Adjacent to the niche in the lower part of the mural we find an image of the Temple that shares many features with a parallel depiction on the coins issued by Bar-Kochba in 132–135 (Laderman, this volume, Fig. 5). Next to the Temple building we can discern a menorah, an etrog, and a lulav. The right-hand section of this panel shows the Binding of Isaac, and the area above it is dominated by a large tree. An early link between the Temple and the Binding of Isaac is provided in biblical postexilic scripture,¹⁹ and further elaborated in rabbinic texts.²⁰ The depiction of the Binding of Isaac as such can be fully understood only against a background of rabbinic commentary. For example, in the right part of the image, next to the Hand of God a tent is shown with a figure standing in its opening. I discussed this figure in detail elsewhere,²¹ and suggested that it represents Ishmael, Isaac's half-brother. Rabbinic literature refers to Ishmael as the representative of nomad peoples, emphasized by the tent next to the figure. Moreover, rabbinic tradition also explains that Ishmael returned to Abraham and

¹⁸ *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* 31, Luria (1852); for an English translation, see Friedlander (1981), 223–230. It should be noted, however, that, according to numerous Christian sources, the Binding of Isaac is certainly to be linked to the theme of salvation.

¹⁹ 2 Chr 3:1; Jubil 8:13; for an English translation of the Book of Jubilees, see VanderKam (1989); Josephus Flavius, *Antiquitates* 1:13,2; for an English translation, see Feldman (2000), 88.

²⁰ *Pirque de Rabbi Eliezer* 31, Friedlander (1981), 227.

²¹ Schubert (1975), 14.

that there was a dispute between Ishmael and Isaac as to who was the Patriarch's rightful heir.²²

Beyond doubt, the tree above the Temple image represents the Tree of Life (Fig. 5), and equating the Tree of Life with the Torah is a frequent motif in rabbinic thought. Similarly, the understanding of the Tree of Life as a symbol of the eschatological meaning of the Torah is a major theme in rabbinic scripture: "R. Simon ben Yohai said: There is no other tree than the Torah, as it is written: [wisdom] is a tree of life to those who grasp her (Prov. 3:18)."²³ One of the Aramaic targumim explains: "For the Law is the tree of life for all who study it and anyone who observes its precepts lives and endures as the tree of life in the world to come. The Law is good for those who serve it in this world like the fruits of the tree of life."²⁴

Even after the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, there was a firm belief among rabbinic scholars that the history of the Chosen People had not yet come to an end. As early as the first half of the second century R. Simeon bar Yohai explained that the Shekhinah, the divine indwelling, followed Israel into exile,²⁵ and that one could expect Her to be present especially at communal gatherings in the synagogues: "Wherever ten persons assemble in a synagogue the Shekhinah is with them, as it is said: 'God standeth in the congregation of God' (Ps 82:1)."²⁶ Owing to the dispersion of the Jewish People, the Shekhinah no longer was confined to a particular locale, and this idea ultimately led to the understanding of the synagogue as a "holy site" (*hagiostopos* in Greek or *athra qadishah* in Aramaic).

The idea of the synagogue as "holy site" is strongly emphasized in the imagery of the late antique floor mosaics of the Beth Alpha and Sepphoris synagogues (Fig. 6). Again, this is not the place to elaborate on the somewhat problematic iconography of the zodiac. One aspect of its multilayered meaning must certainly refer to the calendar and points

²² *Babylonian Talmud*, *Sanhedrin* 89b, for an English translation, see Epstein (1938), vol. 4, pt. 6, 593–597; *Genesis Rabbah*, par. 55:4 on Gen. 22:1, Theodor and Albeck (1965), vol. 2, 715; for an English translation, see Neusner (1985), vol. 2, 269–270; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Gen. 22:1.

²³ *Genesis Rabbah*, par. 12:6 on Gen. 2:4; Theodor and Albeck (1965), vol. 1, 105.

²⁴ *Targum Neophyti* on Gen. 3:24, Díez Macho (1968), 19; for an English version, see *ibid.* 505.

²⁵ *Babylonischer Talmud*, *Megilla* 29a; for an English translation, see Epstein (1938), vol. 2, pt. 8, 74–78.

²⁶ *Mekhilta de Rabbi Ishmael*, *Bahodesh* 11 on Ex. 20:23; Lauterbach (1933), vol. 2, 284–292.

at the correspondence between synagogal liturgy and its heavenly counterpart performed by angels. This understanding of the zodiac against a liturgical background associates it with the Torah shrine and the adjacent depictions of Temple implements, an iconographic program that creates a strong link between synagogal liturgy and the Temple service. The Jerusalem Talmud explains that prayer ought to be recited only in a proper location, and that a person who prays is like someone who performs a pure sacrifice. The same text also refers to the tradition that God dwells in the synagogues and rabbinic schools.²⁷ It is also possible that the zodiac symbolizes the mystical ascent of the pious in prayer up to the Throne of God, represented in the mosaic of Beth Alpha by the two cherub-birds above the Torah shrine.

In Sepphoris the program is elaborated with two further panels showing various aspects of the Temple cult. Zeev Weiss is certainly correct in his emphasis on the theme of “redemption.”²⁸ To this we may add that the cult scenes clearly give expression to the belief that in rabbinic thought synagogal prayer is equated to Temple offering. The Abraham scenes in both Beth Alpha and Sepphoris offer further evidence for the understanding of the synagogue as a holy site. What we have here, then, is a clear demonstration of how post-70 Judaism overcame the catastrophe of destruction without losing its eschatological hopes. In the realm of pictorial art one of the ways to overcome the trauma of destruction and the struggle for a new identity was reached with the aid of Hellenistic imagery and its reinterpretation in accordance with rabbinic thought.

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²⁷ *Jerusalem Talmud, Berakhot V* (8d bottom); for an English translation, Neusner (1989–99), vol. 1, 195–196.

²⁸ Weiss (2005), chap. 5.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–245, Infancy of Moses.
- Fig. 2. Via Latina Catacomb, Rome, first half of fourth century, cub C, Israelites at Mount Sinai.
- Fig. 3. Via Latina Catacomb, Rome, first half of fourth century, cub O, Israelites at Mount Sinai (Resurrection of Lazarus).
- Fig. 4. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–45, Torah Shrine.
- Fig. 5. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–45, reconstruction of the mural above the Torah Shrine: the Tree of Life.
- Fig. 6. Synagogue of Bet Alpha, early sixth century, mosaic pavement.

PART TWO

EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

JONAS OF AQUILEIA A GESTURE TO CONSTANTINE THE GREAT

Margo Stroumsa Uzan

A floor mosaic depicting a Jonas cycle surrounded by a marine genre scene was excavated in the eastern section of the south hall of the patriarchal Church of Aquileia. Although both Jonas and marine genre scenes were popular subjects in Roman and early Christian art, this is the only known example of such a combination (Fig. 1).¹ Its iconographic uniqueness has led some scholars to suggest that the three Jonas scenes were added once the hall was adapted for a Christian religious function at the beginning of the fourth century to what they assumed was the original—marine genre scene—mosaic.² In what follows, I discuss the historical context in which this mosaic was executed and suggest that it was conceived from the beginning as one unit. Relying on historical evidence, as well as on compositional and iconographic analyses, I argue that the mosaic is a homogeneous work, created under the supervision of the bishop of Aquileia, Theodore (c. 314–319), as a gesture to Constantine the Great. Moreover, taken as a homogeneous whole, the mosaic had a theological-political significance, since its content reflects the Donatist controversy that developed in North Africa following the end of Diocletian's persecution of Christians at the beginning of the fourth century.³

The importance of the Jonas story for the early Christians was based, first and foremost, on the authority of the New Testament:

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign; but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonas. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the

¹ The church area and mosaics have been studied intensively since the floor was discovered at the end of the nineteenth century. The basic works on the church and its mosaics are: Lanckoronski, Swoboda, and Niemann (1906); Cecchelli (1933); Mirabella (1953); Brusin and Zovatto (1957); Menis (1958); Menis (1971); Menis (1986).

² Ristow (1994), 97–109; Schumacher (1977), 233–307.

³ On the Donatist church see Frend (1985).

belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nin'evah will arise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold, something greater than Jonas is here." (Matt. 12:38–41; cf. Luke 11:29–32)⁴

Jonas's importance is reflected in early Christian art by a large number of monuments that depict the Jonas cycle and bear a message of redemption.⁵ Most of the depictions belong to a funerary context: catacomb walls (e.g., the so-called Catacombs Anonyma, Via Appia, and Saint Petrus and Marcellinus), and sarcophagi (such as the Children sarcophagus in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek in Copenhagen and on the sarcophagus lid from the Marcenata San Giorgi Gallery in Rome).⁶

A standard iconographic form was gradually consolidated from the early Christian period. In most of these representations, three scenes were chosen to narrate the Jonas story: (1) The sailors throwing Jonas out of the boat, to be swallowed by the 'big fish' depicted as a Ketos (κήτος);⁷ (2) Jonas ejected from the fish's mouth onto a solid ground; (3) Jonas resting under the *Qiqayon*,⁸ which is represented by a plant from the curcubita family, its zucchini-shaped fruits hanging above him.⁹ These three scenes are often juxtaposed with depictions of other heroes that are popular in funerary art, such as the Good Shepherd, the Orant, the Philosopher, Adam and Eve, Noah, Daniel, or Three Hebrews.

⁴ All quotations are from May and Metzger (1988).

⁵ More than 250 depictions of Jonas in early Christian art are described under the entry "Jonas"; Cabrol and Leclercq (1927), 2572–2631. See also in Wilpert (1929–36); Ferrua (1962), 7–69. On the meaning of Jonas in early Christian theology, see Duval (1973).

⁶ The Jonas depictions on sarcophagi and catacomb walls are generally explained by the influence of Jewish texts on the early Christian liturgy; see Fiensy and Darnell (1985), 671–697. It is interesting to note that the name of Jonas, listed as one of the heroes saved by God in the Jewish prayer "*Mi she'ana*," recited during the Day of Atonement, is omitted by the *Ordo Commendationis Animae*.

⁷ The "big fish" of the Hebrew text (*dag gaddol*) was translated in the Septuagint by the word "Ketos" a marine monster who escorts the Nereids, grandchildren of the god Oceanus, in Greek mythology. On the Ketos's origin, see Boardman (1981–99), vol. VIII, 1, 731–736.

⁸ On the different interpretations of this plant see Robinson (1985/3), 390–403.

⁹ The choice of a plant from the curcubita family to represent the *qiqayon* can tell us something about how artists worked: they did not rely only on the biblical text, but also used their immediate surroundings as a source. Plants from the curcubita family (gourd, squash, and cucumber) were widely used in Roman gardens, as their broad leaves shaded pergolas; see Farrar (1998), 36.

Most scholars have dated the Jonas panel of the patriarchal church at Aquileia to the second decade of the fourth century.¹⁰ The sequence of illustrative images fits the traditional layout of the cycle, that is to say it consists of the three traditional scenes. But unlike the occurrences in funerary art, in Aquileia the episodes were amalgamated into a marine genre scene of fishermen in boats on a sea swarming with fish. The new composition and the unaccustomed context alter the meaning of the whole composition. Since Jonas, with his three days' journey in the fish's belly and his miraculous resurrection, was one of Christ's prototypes, he was understood in the funerary context as figuring a hope for salvation of the deceased. Thus, the church mosaic may have had a message directed not only toward the afterlife, but also toward the sacrament of baptism, as is suggested by the marine genre scene.¹¹

In the second decade of the fourth century the church building comprised two parallel halls, a third hall that served as a corridor between them, and some additional smaller rooms. It is impossible to determine with any certainty the different liturgical functions of the south and north halls or those of the additional rooms, as our knowledge of the fourth century liturgy of this "double church" is very limited.¹² Nonetheless, most scholars are of the opinion that the south hall had a liturgical function. The archaeological findings indicated that the construction of the south hall was completed before Christianity became a *religio licita* in the Roman Empire through the Edict of Milan (313 CE). Often remodeled through the centuries, the south hall still serves the cathedral of Aquileia. Over time, the floor sunk and was covered with marine sediment, but plumbing work carried out in 1893 revealed the original mosaics, which have since undergone extensive restoration.

¹⁰ The date of this mosaic is assured by the inscription at the center of the mosaic, which attributes it to Theodore, bishop of Aquileia from 314 to 319. The inscription reads: "THEODORE FEL[(X)] ADIUVANTE DEO OMNIPOTENTE ET POEMNIO CAELITUS TIBI [TRA]DITUM OMNIA [B]AEATE FECISTI ET GLORIOSE DEDICASTI" (Theodore the fortunate, who, with the help of God Almighty did everything in a nice way and consecrated [it] gloriously).

¹¹ See Duval (1973), 37–41.

¹² The church of Aquileia was among the earliest of the "double-church" type, together with Porech, Pola, Concordia, and Brescia; see Duval and Caillet (1996), 22–37. Scholars have different opinions concerning the liturgical functions of the two halls in Aquileia. Some think the south hall served the Catechumens; others see it as the main church, where the Eucharist ceremony was performed; see Mirabella (1950), 181–194, and Menis (1958). On the liturgy of fourth-century Aquileia, see Lemarié, (1969–71), vol. 1, 82–108.

The floor is divided into four equal sections. The first three rectangles from the west are subdivided into three smaller rectangles that contain unidentified portraits, Christian symbols, such as the Good Shepherd and a Victory, animals, and plant life, as well as geometrical decorations. The story of Jonas is depicted in the fourth part of the floor mosaic, at the east end of the hall (Fig. 1).

The entryway is located in the northern wall, near its west end. The mosaic fills the floor for the entire width of the hall; its narrative nature is read from left to right; and its composition is arranged in such a way that it is better understood when viewed from outside—from the “seashore. As believers approached the east part of the hall, they saw the story of Jonas unveiled. The border that separates the Jonas part of the mosaic from the rest of the floor prevented them from stepping into the sea or, in other words, into the sacred area of the church.

As noted above, the integration of the two subjects in the Jonas mosaic—the sea genre scene and the Jonas story—is unique. Unlike the story of Jonas, a Christian topic *par excellence*, the marine scene was often illustrated in non-Christian Roman floor mosaics, many examples of which were found in North Africa.¹³ Thus, researchers were led to think, quite understandably, that the Aquileia mosaic was executed in two phases: the first, close to the end of the third century before the hall was used as a church, showing the four fishing boats and the three fishermen on the rocks, and the second, integrating the Jonas cycle and the inscription designed to “Christianize” the hall, approximately twenty years later.¹⁴ This assumption would make any iconographic, stylistic, or compositional connections between the two subjects rather accidental. However, the composition, the theme, and the forms strongly suggest that the two parts of the mosaic were envisaged as a unity. Moreover, as the Jonas story appears to have acquired a particular meaning in the battle against the Donatists, it is quite conceivable that the political and historical circumstances under which the mosaic was executed were responsible for the unusual juxtaposition and the uniqueness of the composition.

¹³ These mosaics represent a late development of the Nilotic mosaics. The addition of fishermen to the basic Nilotic composition is Roman in origin. It depicts the four fishing methods, net, rod, arrow, and basket. Each of these methods represents a different moral and intellectual virtue; see Aelian (1958), XII, 43.

¹⁴ Ristow (1994), 97–109; Schumacher (1997), 233–307.

The Donatist movement originated in North Africa in the first decade of the fourth century. Named for Donatus Magnus, bishop of Carthage from 315 until his death in c. 355, the Donatists condemned bishops who had collaborated with the imperial authorities during the persecutions of Diocletian (303), because they surrendered up holy books and relics. The Donatists called those bishops *traditores*, betrayers, and maintained that they were no longer fit to be of leaders in the church as they had lost the grace of the Holy Spirit and thus could not administer the sacraments effectively. When Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, died in 311, Caecilianus was ordained as his successor by Felix, bishop of Aptunga. The Donatists rejected this nomination, considering Felix a *traditor*, and ordained Majorinus (d. 315) in his place.¹⁵

After several unsuccessful attempts to solve the problem, in August 314 Constantine invited forty-six bishops and other churchmen from all the Christian communities of the Empire, including Theodore, bishop of Aquileia, to a synod at Arles, to determine the status of Caecilianus and Majorinus. Sixteen of the delegates came from Gaul, ten from Italy, nine from Africa, six from Spain, three from Britain, and one from Dalmatia.¹⁶ The declared aim of the synod was to find a compromise between Caecilianus and Majorinus, both claiming to be bishops of Carthage, but Constantine considered the council to have a greater political significance: to remove the Donatist threat, already assuming dangerous proportions in North Africa, from the imperial agenda.¹⁷ Constantine believed it was his duty to maintain public order and Christian unity, perhaps not so much because he was deeply Christian, but because he saw this as a way to consolidate his political objective—a universal and monarchical government under the guidance of the church.¹⁸

The fact that two Aquileian representatives were summoned to Arles, Bishop Theodore and a deacon named Aghaton, suggests the relative importance of the city. Moreover, Theodore's signature is fourth on

¹⁵ Frend (1985), 3–24, 141–168.

¹⁶ Gaudemet (1977), 11; Davis (1981), 58.

¹⁷ Eusebius cites a letter sent from Constantine to Causilianus, bishop of Carthage, in 312/3. In it Constantine grants the bishop a large sum of money, which is to be spent solely for the Catholic churches of North Africa, Numidia, and Mauritania; Eusebius (1981), 406–407. Optatus, bishop of Milevis during the second half of the fourth century, cites a letter supposedly sent by Constantine to Aelafius (Aelapius?), the governor of North Africa in 313, in which Constantine speaks of his fear of a division of the Empire; see Optatus (1997), 181–184.

¹⁸ Eadie (1977), containing various opinions concerning Constantine's conversion; Davis (1981), 58; Keresztes (1981), 63–66.

the letter sent to Pope Sylvester at the conclusion of the council, as the pontiff was not able to attend. It is not surprising that the assembly adopted the decision that had been taken in Rome a few months earlier, demanding that the Donatists accept Caecilianus as bishop.¹⁹ After Constantine was notified of the assembly's decision, a reply was sent to the council on his behalf:²⁰

The incomprehensible kindness of our God does not allow mankind to wander too long in the darkness, nor does it allow the odious wills of some persons so to prevail as not to grant men a new opportunity for conversion to the rule of righteousness by opening to them a saving path by means of its most glorious light. I have indeed learned of this through many examples, and can judge of the matter by my own case. For there were at first in me things, which fell short of righteousness, and I did not think that the supernal power could see any of the things hidden in my heart. What fortune should this have brought upon me?—Surely one overflowing with every evil. But Almighty God, who sits in the watch-tower of heaven, has granted to me what I did not deserve. Truly, most holy bishops of the Savior Christ, I can now neither describe nor number the gifts which of His heavenly benevolence He has granted to me, his servant. I rejoice therefore, dear brethren, I especially rejoice that you have now, after a completely fair adjudication, recalled to a better hope and fortune those whom the wickedness of the Devil seemed to have led by his wretched persuasion to depart from the glorious light of the Catholic law....²¹

In this personal, revealing letter to the synod participants, Constantine describes the process he went through from ignorance to the bosom of the Catholic faith. In the beginning, he was in the dark, suspecting his own soul and God's ability to penetrate his heart's secrets; and even though he was not yet completely a believer, God, in his compassion, accorded him redemption by showing him the right path of the Catholic

¹⁹ The case was tried in Rome in 313. Ten bishops appeared on each side, the leading representative of the Donatists being Bishop Donatus of Casae Nigrae. The decision was entirely in favor of Caecilianus, and Donatus was found guilty of various ecclesiastical offences; Davis (1981), 57.

²⁰ This letter, called *Epistula Constantini ad Episcopos Catholicos*, is one of a number of documents that have survived from the Donatist schism. Some scholars have suggested that it was written not by Constantine himself, but by one of the emperor's clerical advisers. Charles Odahl rejects this suggestion, claiming that Constantine was the author. For our purpose it is important to note that the letter was sent to the synod's participants on behalf of the emperor, whether he wrote it or someone else drafted it for him; see Odahl (1993), 274–289.

²¹ The translation quoted here is from Elliott (1996), 30–31.

Church. This is why he wishes to rescue the Donatists from Satan's grasp and bring them back to the rightness of the Catholic faith.

I suggest that this letter inspired the designers of the Aquilean mosaic. Constantine's confession evokes the Jonas story: Jonas attempting to escape God's mission by sailing to Tarshish; his belief that God was unable to know his heart's secrets; the dark of the fish's belly, where he prayed for God's help; his acceptance of God's help even though he was not worthy of it; and finally that God saved him from the jaws of Satan-Ketos, and also allowed him to save the citizens of Nineveh from a tragic destiny through recognition of the true faith.

The choice of Jonas to adorn the floor of the Aquileian church seems only appropriate for Constantine's theological message as well as for his political one. It is not too far-fetched to assume that Theodore and his colleagues at Arles could make the connection between Constantine's words and the Jonas story. In order to make the council's verdict more palatable, they pointed out the mercifulness of its moral: through its decision, Constantine was revealing God's compassion by giving the Donatists the opportunity to repent without punishment. The North African bishops were probably familiar with the writings of Tertullian (died c. 225), Clement of Alexandria (died c. 215), and Origen (died c. 254), three African fathers who commented on Jonas. In his treatise *Against Marcion*, Tertullian emphasized God's compassion for the inhabitants of Nineveh,²² and Clement of Alexandria, in his *Stromata*, pointed out Jonas's patience.²³ We also know that Origen treated the story of the prophet on several occasions (although his commentary on Jonas is now lost).²⁴ According to Jerome's *In Ionam*, Origen saw in Jonas's redemption more than a grand testimony to God's goodness. When Jonas was further called on to save others, God manifested the culmination of his generosity. Hence, the image of Jonas not only represents Christ; he also prefigures every *traditor* bishop who might have collaborated with Rome at the time of the Diocletian persecutions.

The Jonas story expresses the compassion and mercy of God. The depicted story purified the name of all the *traditores* and that of Constantine himself, who was suspected of having persecuted Christians

²² Marcion believed in two gods—the cruel creator and the merciful Christ. For Tertullian, the book of Jonas was used to show that the Old Testament's God was no less merciful than the God of the New Testament, as they were one. Duval (1973), 169.

²³ Duval (1973), 103–104, 186.

²⁴ Ibid., 191–211.

before his conversion. Despite Constantine's efforts to come to an agreement with the Donatists, it was not until 321 that he granted them the liberty to act according to their consciences and declared that the points in dispute between them and the Orthodox Church should be left to the judgment of God.²⁵

When Theodore was invited to Arles, he was probably already thinking of the appropriate decoration for his church. It had been about a year since Christianity had become a legitimate religion. We do not know to what extent Theodore was aware of the dimensions of the Donatist schism in North Africa or of its possible consequences. His North African colleagues, however, who were in intimate conflict with the Donatists, were undoubtedly disseminating anti-Donatist propaganda across the Mediterranean. It is then reasonable to suggest that Theodore was influenced by their arguments in designing the concept of his mosaic.

If my reading of the Jonas mosaic against the background of anti-Donatist polemics is correct, it is possible that the pavement was produced during Constantine's visit to Aquileia in 318–319, maybe as a gesture to the emperor himself. The tetrarch Maximianus (286–305), Constantine's father-in-law through marriage to his daughter Fausta, had a palace in Aquileia. Constantine lived there for most of 318 and on until the *processus consularis* (public appearance of the emperor), which was held there in 319.²⁶ It is rather tempting to speculate that Constantine was indeed the guest of honor at the consecration of the church, which took place either shortly before or shortly after Theodore's death. But there is no clear-cut evidence to support this assumption.

Against this background, I submit that the Jonas mosaic contains a political as well as a theological message, approved by Constantine himself. Through this visual communication Constantine was able to deliver

²⁵ Elliott (1996), 93–94. The remarkably limited information about Donatus, a man who for forty years led a movement that vied for recognition as the legitimate church of North Africa, reflects the fear the Donatist schism sowed within the Catholic Church. During his lifetime, Donatus was unchallenged as leader of the church; his writings were quoted and his memory revered long after his death. He was exiled in 347 and died in about 355, widely regarded as a martyr. He was accorded the epithet "Donatus the Great" and his significance in Africa has been compared to that of Athanasius in Egypt. Unlike Athanasius, however, he was not on the side that eventually emerged triumphant. He was generally acknowledged as a vigorous leader, but his opponents destroyed his extensive writings.

²⁶ This *processus consularis* is commemorated on a gold coinage minted in Aquileia in its honor, see Bruun (1966), vol. 8, 388.

a clear message to his bishops and his people: that the Catholicism was the only approved faith; that he approved all of his bishops' acts; that he was free of any blame from his past; and that he had displayed a moderate and merciful behavior toward the Donatists.

The above conception of the political and theological context suggests a plausible setting in which this original mosaic was designed. Discussion of the iconographic and compositional aspects may provide further insight into the circumstances under which it was executed. Although a detailed examination of the style would have been useful, that is almost impossible owing to the extensive restoration that the mosaic has subject to over the years. A superficial consideration of the style does not suggest any significant stylistic differences or any important differences in the cutting or in the inlay of the stones between the Jonas cycle and the sea genre scene.

The two subjects—Jonas and the fishermen—could not have any assigned iconographical connection unless they were planned as one composition. A vital clue is the number of fishermen—twelve—like the apostles. Ten are still fully visible: seven in the boats and three on the rocks. The other two were buried under a pillar during the restoration of the church after the earthquake of 1348. In the second boat from the left one can discern the eleventh fisherman's hand, holding a duck by a cord. The remains of the twelfth fisherman's wings can be easily recognized in the third boat from the left.²⁷ The correlation between the fishermen and the apostles is based on the apostles' previous occupation and Christ's words concerning their mission:

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zeb'edee and John his brother, in the boat with Zeb'edee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him. (Matt. 4:18–22).

Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia from 388 until his death in 407, left an allegorical commentary on boats, fishermen, fish, and the sea in

²⁷ It is not at all surprising to find a winged fisherman in the mosaic, since it was based on Nilotic scenes in which figures often appear as winged putti, as for instance in the mosaics from Piazza Armerina. Indeed, the fact that these fishermen are winged male figures reinforces the idea of their holy mission. Nevertheless, I cannot explain why some of them are winged, while others are not.

his *Tractatus in Matthaeum*.²⁸ The fish represent the believers who are awaiting redemption. The believers are entitled to redemption through Christ-Jonas's death and resurrection on the third day. The fishermen are those who embody this message, offering believers eternal life, as Christ ordered them:

And Jesus came and said to them "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Matt. 28:18–20).

A mural dated to the end of the fourth century in a small church in Rome, Monte della Giustizia (which no longer exists, but is known from a sketch done by De Rossi in 1870) may support the supposition that the fishermen represent the apostles.²⁹ The lower part of the composition is a seascape with fishermen and boats, using different fishing methods, as in Aquileia. In the upper section Christ is seated on a throne, a basket of scrolls at his feet, and his disciples are holding scrolls in their hands. The lower scene thus illuminates the upper one: as the disciples save believers from the dangers of this world through the Holy Scripture, so the fishermen are said to save the fish-believers from the dangers of the sea, offering them eternal life.

If the fish represent the believers and the fishermen the apostles, then the orant on Jonas's boat may represent the repenting pagans after the sea has become calm again: "Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows." (Jon. 1:16). In some earlier depictions this man appears naked, but when he is clothed, he wears a short tunic, which identifies him as a worker, probably one of the sailors.³⁰ In the Aquileia mosaic, however, the tunic reaches the man's ankles, suggesting a higher rank. This orant figure is the link between this world and heaven—the bridge between the believers and God. For Chromatius he represents God himself or Christ ("*habens Deum gubernatorem*"),³¹ but when the mosaic was executed he may have represented the idea of the Catholic bishopric and, more specifically, Theodore himself.

²⁸ Lemarié (1989), 141–152.

²⁹ The sketch is reproduced by Drewer (1981), 536.

³⁰ See, for instance, the Jonas sarcophagus, Vatican cemetery, late third century, in the Museo Pio Cristiano, Vatican City, reproduced in Wilpert (1929–36), vol. I, pl. IX, 3.

³¹ Lemarié (1989), 144.

A canon on baptism from the synod of Arles may strengthen the identification of the orant as a bishop.³² One of the Donatists' claims was that the validity of any sacrament depended upon the personal worthiness of the priest administering it. If a clergyman who was guilty of a serious sin were to baptize a person, that baptism would be invalid, and the person would have to be baptized again. As the Donatists suspected some bishops to have been ordained by a *traditor*, like Caecilianus, they often rebaptized members of their community. This practice was particularly abhorrent to the orthodox, and the council at Arles forbade it. It is thus possible that this figure also carries a political message concerning baptism. It represents an orthodox bishop (Theodore?) administering the sacrament of baptism, to make the point that only orthodox baptism at the hands of a duly ordained clergyman can lead to redemption.³³

One of the most dominant characteristics of Roman mosaics is the concept of symmetry typical for ornamental-geometrical as well as narrative designs. Horizontal or vertical patterns or both may achieve the effect.³⁴ The Aquileian mosaic does not present any kind of equilibrium, whether read from left to right or from top to bottom. The artists certainly were familiar with the common compositional norms and most likely were aware that their work diverged from them.³⁵ Thus, although such a compositional anomaly might be explained by the lack of a model for this particular juxtaposition, it is even more likely that the Jonas story, unlike the seascape, was a novelty in the mosaic medium.

³² "De Africa autem quod propria lege sua utantur ut rebaptizent, placuit ut ad ecclesiam si aliqui hereticus uenerit, interrogent eum symbolum et, si peruiderint eum in Patre et Filio et Spiritus sancto esse baptizatum, manus tantum ei imponator. Quod si interrogatus symbolum non responderit trinitatem hanc, merito baptizetur. Et cetera." In another manuscript: "Venientes de Donatistis vel de Montensibus per manus impositionem suscipiantur, ex eo quod contra ecclesiasticum ordinem baptizare videntur"; Gaudement (1977), 50, 66. "Montanibus" (Montanists) was a mocking nickname for the Donatists, meaning that they came from the mountains, and were therefore uncultured.

³³ This baptismal interpretation of the mosaic follows Menis, who explained the liturgical function of the two halls as follows: The northern hall accommodated the already baptized believers, while the southern hall accommodated the catechumens, preparing them to receive the sacrament of baptism; see Menis (1986).

³⁴ See, for instance, the vine mosaic from El Djem (second half of the third century) in El Djem Museum (Tunis), reproduced in Blanchard-Lemee et al. (1995), fig. 69, or the "Room of the Fishing Cupids" and the "Room of the Small Hunt," both from the Villa Erculia in the Piazza Armerina (early fourth century), reproduced in Ciurca (2000), 40 and 41.

³⁵ Aquileia was known as a center for mosaic workshops since its foundation.

One result of this asymmetry is the variation in density, which divides the composition into two triangles, drawn by an imaginary line running from the northwest corner to the southeast. The triangle on the northeast contains the first scene of the Jonas cycle—Jonas being thrown overboard and swallowed by the Ketos. In this triangle the fish are bigger and there are fewer of them, resulting in a more airy look. The second triangle contains the two other Jonas scenes, four boats and three rocks with fishermen. Together with a large number of smaller fish, the impression made by this triangle is very different, being crowded and energetic. The difference in the size of the elements can be measured by comparison with the Ketos. The monster appears once when swallowing Jonas and again when disgorging him and is thus the link between the two triangles. To understand its function one must go back to the early tradition of pictorial renderings of the Jonas narrative.

As already noted, most of the Jonas cycles appear in funerary contexts. The catacomb painters were more concerned with the symbolic meaning of each scene than with its narrative effect and considered every scene as an independent entity. Sometimes the artist settled for only one scene representing the redemptive meaning of the story.³⁶ However, on sarcophagi the story was depicted as a consecutive narrative. The three conventional scenes were aligned on the body of the sarcophagus, creating a variety of compositions based on the isolated images from the catacombs. One such example, the late-third-century Jonas sarcophagus in the Vatican cemetery, is divided into two parts; reading from left to right, Jonas is cast into the sea, he is disgorged, and he lies under a (qiqayon) tree (Fig. 2). This composition, or a similar one, is a possible source for the Jonas mosaic in question, as it is similar to it in various ways. First, the proportional relation among the three scenes: the first and the third scenes of the story are nearly equal in size, whereas the second scene (Jonas being thrown up on land) is smaller. The same relation in size can be seen in the mosaic: Jonas and the Ketos from the second scene are smaller than Jonas and the Ketos of the first and Jonas under the qiqayon. Second, the positioning: the first and second scenes are on the same horizontal line, whereas the third is close to the second, and a bit higher. The same characteristic

³⁶ As in the Annunciation cubiculum and the Velatio cubiculum of the Priscilla catacomb, and in the Anonyma catacomb on Via Anapo, reproduced in Vincenzo, Bisconti, and Mazzoleni (1999), 100, fig. 111; 97, fig. 107; 70, Pl. II, respectively.

can be seen in the mosaic: the first and second scenes are on the same imaginary horizontal line, and the third is slightly higher. Furthermore, on sarcophagi, a *tavola ensata* in the center, on which the name of the deceased is inscribed, often divides the two parts of the composition. Similarly, in the Aquileia mosaic the inscription commemorating Theodore divides the composition into two equal parts.

All these similarities strongly suggest that such a sarcophagus might have been used as an iconographic source for the Jonas part of the mosaic, right from the beginning. This is further indicated by the proportions of the Ketos and the fish in both triangles. It appears that the size of the Ketos provided a comparative scale for the fish: around the first, big Ketos, the artist depicted rather larger fish, whereas around the smaller Ketos, the fish are smaller. This adjustment of sizes within the two triangles does not depend on the different sources of the composition, that is, Jonas and the sea genre, but rather creates cogent links between the two subjects that force the viewer to acknowledge that the two parts were developed at the same time, and not in two different stages. Moreover, as the fishes's size depends on the size of the Ketos, it is clear that the Jonas cycle was the nucleus of the composition: the three Jonas cycles were drawn first and then the seascape was evolved around each scene.³⁷

Marine genre mosaics, popular in North Africa during the third and fourth centuries, reached Italy through Sicily.³⁸ The North African examples were grouped and classified by Caroline Belz into several compositional categories.³⁹ The simplest composition is a sea or pond full of fauna, functioning as an encyclopedia of marine life. The pool is depicted from a bird's eye view, but the fish are in profile. This inconsistency of viewpoint originated in Egyptian conceptual perspective and is typical of Nilotic scenes. Fishermen at work were added to the basic composition, transforming it into a genre scene. The fishermen added a third point of view and were usually depicted in three-quarter profile. Sometimes a shore was shown, either in the foreground or at the back

³⁷ Considering the size of the floor that had to be paved by mosaic (more than 700 m²), it is plausible to conclude that several artists worked simultaneously. The same might have happened with the Jonas mosaic: Different crews working simultaneously on different parts of the mosaic might have increased the gap between its two sides.

³⁸ Many of them can be seen in the Piazza Armerina. Dunbabin has pointed out the North African influence on those mosaics; see Dunbabin (1999), 70–73; see also Wilson (1982), 413–428.

³⁹ Belz (1978), 17–21.

of the scene, adding a landscape dimension. The complexity of the composition might have been further enriched when a mythical scene was added, as in the Ulysses and the Sirens mosaic from Dougga (Tunisia) or in the procession of Amphitrite from Constantine (Algeria).

An essential characteristic of Roman architecture in North Africa was the correspondence between a building's function and its decoration. Often the mosaic's theme was connected to the architectural function of the building for which it was designed. For example, the mosaic from Oudna (Tunisia), known as the villa of the Laberi, from the third century (now in the Bardo Museum), represents a view of a large farm with various scenes of daily life. Mythical figures with apotropaic value had religious significance, as in the mosaic from the bottom of a pond in Sousse (Tunisia), dated to the middle of the second century (now in the Sousse Museum), where various fish and shellfish surround the head of Neptune.⁴⁰

The Jonas story in Aquileia resembles the mythical scenes in the North African mosaics, not only in its function, but also in its position in the composition. That is to say, the narrative function of the Jonas story is similar to the mythical scenes. The Aquilean mosaic might have been conceived by Theodore and his colleagues at Arles as a biblical scene—the Jonas story—replacing a mythical one, molded as a genre scene within a sea composition. The exchange of the mythical pagan scene with a biblical “Christian” one reflects the search for a new, Christian, iconography within the well-established forms and frames of the artistic tradition.

To sum up, the Jonas cycle and the marine genre scene in the mosaic at Aquileia are bound together by iconographical, theological, historical, and formal ties. The composition reflects a mixture of “pagan” style with Christian theological sources, in an attempt to convey an extremely relevant political-theological message. The compositional weakness of the mosaic (its lack of symmetry) can probably be accounted for by its originality, as it was created out of different media (sculpture and painting) and different sources (pagan and Christian) to convey a clear message. As the Donatist schism was relatively unknown outside Africa, the mosaic's meaning remained obscure and its iconographic message was not duplicated elsewhere, not even by Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia, eighty years later. Nevertheless, there is little reason to doubt

⁴⁰ Poinssot (1965), 219–31; Picard (1960): 17–49.

that the mosaic had an immense impact on Chromatius as well as on the Christian believers of Aquileia, as he himself implies in one of his commentaries:

How blessed fishermen who God has chosen you first out of all scholars of the law and writers, out of wise men, for the duty of divine preaching and vocation of grace! And that so great chosen preaching was so worthy and appropriate for our Lord, that the more it was preached by the lower and smaller of the world, which did not conquer the world by the wisdom of the word, but liberated humankind from the error of death by simple preaching of the faith, the more it procreated admiration to his name (faith), as said the apostle.⁴¹

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⁴¹ *O beatos piscatores istos quos Dominus inter tot doctores legis et scribas, inter tot saeculi sapientes, ad divinae praedicationis officium et ad gratiam apostolatus primos elegit! Et digna sane Domino nostro atque conveniens praedicationis eius fuit talis electio, ut in praedicatione nominis sui tanto maioris laudis admiratio nasceretur, quanto eam mundi infimi et humiles saeculi praedicassent qui non per sapientiam verbi mundum caperent, sed per simplicem fidei praedicationem de errore mortis genus humanum liberarent, sicut ait apostolus*; Lemarié (1989), 147.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. The Story of Jonas, Floor Mosaic, Aquileia, early fourth century, Archivio Seat/Alinari Archive.
- Fig. 2. The Story of Jonas, Sarcophagus, Lateran Museum, Vatican City, late third century, Alinari Archive.

DONATIONS AND DONORS AS REFLECTED IN THE MOSAIC
PAVEMENTS OF TRANSJORDAN'S CHURCHES IN THE
BYZANTINE AND Umayyad PERIODS

Lihi Habas

Transjordan, which in the Byzantine period comprised Provincia Arabia and neighboring regions belonging to Palaestina Prima, Secunda, and Tertia, saw the founding of many churches between the fourth and the eighth century. Construction reached a peak in the sixth century and continued into the Umayyad period.

What is particularly striking is that despite Transjordan's location on the desert margin, where the climate was harsh, the geographic conditions difficult, and the water in short supply, several churches were built at almost all of the sites. The apparent incongruity of this situation raises a number of questions. What were the circumstances and causes of the accelerated building of churches? Who was responsible for their construction and decoration? What was the relationship between the laity and the clergy, and what role was played by each group in the ambitious building program?

Using several different approaches in tandem may provide at least partial answers to these questions. With the tools at our disposal—study of the archaeological finds, deciphering of the inscriptions, and compositional-iconographic analysis of the mosaic pavements—we can establish the locations of dedicatory inscriptions, the identities of the donors and patrons, and the nature and position of their depictions in the mosaic pavements. This information may shed light on the nature and motivation of donations in Transjordan's Christian community during the Byzantine and Umayyad periods.¹

¹ The figures from Transjordan are by courtesy of M. Piccirillo, to whom I am very grateful.

Dedicatory Inscriptions

In several chapels and churches in Transjordan, the east end of the nave is emphasized by a special panel in front of the liturgical space. This panel was the preferred location for dedicatory inscriptions, generally placed within a *tabula ansata*. The inscriptions include the names of the overseers and donors (both lay and clerical) responsible for the building and decoration of the church, the date, and a blessing or memorial dedication to the dead. Among the numerous examples, we may note a group of churches in northern Transjordan, such as the Hegumen Church and the churches of St. Peter (Fig. 1) and St. George at Khirbat al-Samra, the last containing an inscription alluding to anonymous donors: “In the month of Artemisius at the time of the tenth indiction of the year 5[32]. O Lord, have mercy and protect this village from the little one to the big one from now forever [AD 627]”;² the churches of St. Paul, St. Peter, and St. Basil at Rihab, that of St. Paul containing an inscription that mentions the donors’ names and the date of the church’s construction: “At the time of the most holy and most blessed Archbishop Polieuctus, and of Bassus the most illustrious *paramonarius*, this Temple of Saint Paul was completed and paved with mosaics, thanks to the offerings of John and Elias, [sons of] Martyrius, in the month of June of the thirteenth indiction of the year 490 of the province [AD 595]”;³ the Church of the Virgin Mary at Madaba;⁴ the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus at Khirbat Dariya/az-Za’tara/Smad;⁵ and the Church of St. Thomas at Khirbat Sa’ad.⁶ Dedicatory inscriptions have also been found in central Transjordan, in the Church of Sts. Lot and Procopius, the Church of St. George, and the lower Chapel of the Priest John at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat;⁷ the monastery of al-Dayr at Ma’in;⁸ at Khilda in the region of Philadelphia-Amman;⁹ and the Church of John the Baptist at Gerasa.¹⁰

² Piccirillo (1993), 306–308, figs. 600–602, 606–608, 611, 614.

³ Piccirillo (1993), 311–312, figs. 626–630, 633.

⁴ Di Segni (1992), 256–257, fig. 1.

⁵ Karasneh (1997), 21–26, fig. 12.

⁶ Sari (1995), 528, figs. 4, 5.

⁷ Di Segni (1998), 439–440, 442–443, 445–446, nos. 36a–c, 42, 47.

⁸ Piccirillo and Russan (1976), figs. 5, 6, pl. XXVIII:1.

⁹ Najjar and Sa’id (1994), 551, fig. 1, photos 3, 4, 9.

¹⁰ Welles (1938), inscr. 306.

The inscription is sometimes set into an arrangement of vine scrolls or a row of trees, with the donors and genre scenes between them. The position and character of the panel have a particular significance, which we examine against the background of the overall iconographic program of the churches.

*The Image of the Donor in the Mosaic Pavements
of Churches in Transjordan*

The dedicatory inscriptions scattered in mosaic pavements throughout the churches mention the patrons who were responsible for their building and decoration and provide information about the patrons' social class, economic status, inner spiritual world, and cultural values. They attest to cooperative donations made by urban and rural residents and indicate that civic pride was important among the prosperous middle class. Donations by members of the civilian and military authorities are referred to, and women have a prominent place.¹¹ The inscriptions also include commemorations of and prayers for founders and donors. The mosaics contain figures as well as inscriptions, some anonymous and some identified by name. Farmers, hunters, fishermen, and caravan leaders appear side by side with clerics wearing vestments and holding sacred objects.

How can we identify the image of the donor-patron within the host of figurative depictions? How can we distinguish between regular genre scenes and a donor who is depicted in a similar manner, and in what way did the craftsman express the difference between them? Is the location of an image the key to its identification as a donor, or do we need additional criteria?

On rare occasions, figures that seem to be donors appear in the liturgical space. For instance, in the Church of the Rivers (St. Sergius) at Kastron Mefaa at Umm al-Rasas, farmers are depicted in the bema. Despite the severe iconoclastic damage, among three pomegranate trees laden with fruit one can make out a human figure sitting on a footstool, holding a fruit or a branch. A second figure, with a basket of

¹¹ Hunt (1994), 119–121.

fruit beside him, is picking fruit from the tree. To the north are another figure, damaged beyond recognition, and a sheep.¹²

In the bema of the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus at Khirbat Dariya/az-Za'tara/Smad, located within Palaestina Secunda (Fig. 2), depictions of the clergy, who are probably donors, have been destroyed by iconoclasts. One figure holds a *candelabrum* (candlestick) and another holds a *thuribulum* (censer). In the center of the west side of the border is an inscription: "Alas to the Saints Cosmas and Damianus, in memory of your handmaiden Mary." There is another inscription within a medallion in the apse: "+ O Lord God, to the Saints Cosmas and Damianus, in memory of your servant Theodore." An inscription set in the east end of the nave in front of the bema bears reference to additional donors: "In honor of the holiest of saints the illustrious bishop Casisao head of the bishops Kilonus all...the Saints Cosmas and Damianus, the work was carried out by the care of Thomas [son of?] Arsenius, for the sake of his redemption and the redemption of others. The work began in the days of Priest John...and Sergius and Climothaus on the first of March in the twelfth indiction in the year...18."¹³

In the bema of the Chapel of Elias, Maria, and Soreg at Gerasa, both farmers and clergy appear in a composition of vine scrolls issuing from a palm tree, which also includes sheep and episodes from the cycle of the vine harvest and hunting, as well as donors identified by name (Fig. 3). The donors are shown frontally. Elias wears priestly vestments and holds a censer. Maria's head is covered by a veil that falls to her chest and is fastened by a cross-shaped brooch; her right hand is on her breast and her left hand holds an (unclear) object. Soreg's uncovered hair is long; her left hand is hidden beneath her mantle and there is an olive branch in her right hand. Birds fill the spaces between the scrolls. Unlike the vintners and hunters that are shown in the genre scenes, the ecclesiastical figures are in a frontal, frozen pose and their clothing differs in detail. Saller and Bagatti identified Soreg as the image of a deceased woman, whose serious and calm figure reflects the eternal peace that reigns in Heaven.¹⁴

These panels in the bema, in which frontal figures are depicted between vegetal motifs, have exact parallels in numerous churches in the

¹² Piccirillo (1993), 240, 241, figs. 391, 392.

¹³ Karasneh (1997), figs. 12, 14–16.

¹⁴ Saller and Bagatti (1949), 269–289, pls. 45, 50:1–2, 51:1.

region of Madaba, Gerasa, and Philadelphia-Amman. In these churches, human figures are shown among trees and vine branches in a special panel at the east end of the nave. An additional common element is the names, which are always placed close to the heads of the figures. Among the churches of Gerasa, I single out the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus (533) (Fig. 4). In the center of the panel is an inscription in a *tabula ansata* that dates the church, referring to Bishop Paul and the founder Theodore and stating that the church is dedicated to the martyrs Cosmas and Damianus. There is a pair of cypress (?) trees on either side and a named donor stands between them. On the left is Theodore the *paramonarius*, wearing priestly vestments and holding a smoking censer. On the right is his wife, Georgia, in *orans* pose.¹⁵

In the Church of Bishop Isaiah (559), though the panel is badly damaged, one can make out trees with portraits of donors between them on either side of the stone slab on which the dedicatory inscription is engraved. One of the figures is shown holding a staff and another a censer; the third (Konstantinos) is shooting an arrow at an animal; and the fourth is holding a chalice.¹⁶

A similar depiction appears in four churches at Umm al-Rasas. In the Church of St. Paul (second half of the sixth century) (Fig. 5) grape vines climb apple, pear, and pomegranate trees, and despite the severe iconoclastic damage, one can discern portraits of donors among the trees and a ram or billy goat on either side. Here, too, the donors are named: Sergis holds a censer, while Rabbus and another figure pick fruit. The donors' names appear once more—in the dedicatory inscription in front of the bema.¹⁷ In the Church of Bishop Sergius (587/8) (Fig. 6), four figures engaged in agricultural pursuits appear among fruit trees. Despite the iconoclastic damage, we can identify Robab, who is leading an animal; another figure picking up olives that have fallen from the tree; a basket full of olives; and a bird-hunting scene. Although the name Robab does not recur in any of the numerous inscriptions referring to donors scattered throughout the church, it seems likely that these figures are donors, since their location and occupations are similar to those in the Church of St. Paul.¹⁸ In the Church of St. Stephen (Fig. 7), seven donors bearing offerings appear among seven trees in front of the bema.

¹⁵ Piccirillo (1993), 288–289, figs. 507–509, 535, 538.

¹⁶ Piccirillo (1993), 294, fig. 566.

¹⁷ Piccirillo (1997), 382–392, pianta I, fig. 5, fotos 2, 3, 25–27.

¹⁸ Piccirillo, *Santo Stefano: mosaici* (1994), 122–134, figs. 3, 6, 10, 11.

Although here, too, iconoclasts have damaged the scene, one can read the name of the first donor on the left (Samuel). The second holds a lamb or a sheep, the fourth carries an amphora, the fifth is accompanied by an animal standing in front of a tree, the sixth carries a peacock, and the seventh is playing a flute. Very similar panels appear at the east ends of the aisles. In the south aisle stands Abib son of Zugon, next to the image of the village of Limbon and a pear tree. Two inscriptions mention the donation of Kaium, a monk and priest of Phisga and superior of the monastery on Mount Nebo (Remember, O Lord, your servant Kaium, monk and priest of Phisga) and the anonymous mosaic craftsmen who dedicated their work to the Lord (Remember, O Lord, your servants the mosaic craftsmen, whose names you know). The panel at the end of the north aisle portrays donors among pomegranate trees and shrubs. Above them is an image of the village of Diblaton in the Madaba region, together with two dedicatory inscriptions. The four donors, identified by inscriptions near their heads, carry objects that hint at their roles within the community, such as the staff carried by John and the palm branches in the hands of the first and fourth figures. The first three figures stand on a kind of platform between two trees, a feature that emphasizes their importance.¹⁹ In the Church of the Lions (574 or 589), a portrayal of Kastron Mefaa, identified by name and including a column crowned by a cross, appears in the eastern panel of the nave. Of this panel, an inscription and a hunting scene survive, and there may have been donors among trees.²⁰

A figure in *orans* pose appears in the Church of Bishop Malechius at Mukawir. Here the special panel is located at the east end of the north aisle, in front of an anteroom leading to a lateral room. This figure in *orans* pose is depicted on the right of a double facade; on its left are two lighted lamps hanging from chains, on either side of an unidentifiable object. In the center of the composition one can make out a hanging curtain. In front of the step to the anteroom is a dedicatory inscription in a *tabula ansata*: “Oh Christ, help Your servant Sergius, and give rest to Your servant George.”²¹

In the church at Ya'mūn near Nu'aymah (seventh century), located within Palaestina Secunda, only a very little has survived of the eastern

¹⁹ Piccirillo, *Santo Stefano: mosaici* (1994), 136–157, figs. 23, 24, 29–32, 35, 42, 44, 49, 56, 57; *Le iscrizioni di Kastron Mefaa* (1994), 249–252, inscrrs. 6:a–d, 8:a–c.

²⁰ Piccirillo (1993), 236, figs. 337, 373, 376.

²¹ Piccirillo (1993), 246, figs. 415, 417.

panel. Four named figures are portrayed in the north aisle and in front of the apse. Their identity is uncertain, but a long dedicatory inscription uncovered in the church names saints, martyrs, dedicators, and people who participated in the building of the church. Among others, Daniel, Azria, Hananyus, and Isaac are mentioned.²²

Figures identified by name, wearing clerical vestments, holding books, candlesticks, or censers, or standing in *orans* pose, also appear in other parts of the church, especially in the nave, between episodes from daily life.

Among figures in *orans* pose, I may mention the one in the nave of the chapel on the acropolis of Philadelphia-Amman, which stands between a lion and a zebu; in the background is a partially preserved inscription beginning with a cross, which perhaps gave the figure its name.²³ Another figure in *orans* pose is John son of Ammonius in the north aisle of the Church of St. George at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Fig. 8). John is shown on a carpet of vine scrolls populated by a pair of peacocks, a lion facing a zebu, and episodes from daily life. An inscription in a panel between columns tells us that John was a member of the family responsible for the decoration of the church. The *orans* pose, which symbolizes the soul of the deceased praying for Paradise, led Saller and Bagatti to identify the figure of John as a portrait of a deceased person and his praying soul. The pair of peacocks and the lion opposite the zebu, as symbols of eternity and the Last Days, support this conclusion.²⁴

Among figures holding a censer, I can point to Ouadia son of Olesu with a censer in his right hand, standing near the church in the nave of the Church of Bishop Sergius (587/8) at Umm al-Rasas. In the same pavement an anonymous donor, carrying a child on his shoulder, is pointing at the church (Fig. 6).²⁵ Among the damaged figures in the nave of the Church of Bishop Isaiah (559) at Gerasa, one can read the names of George and Thomas; another figure whose name has been destroyed holds a censer that is identical to the one in the portrayal of the donors on the eastern panel of the nave.²⁶

²² Najjar (2001), 414–415.

²³ Piccirillo (1993), figs. 459, 460, 462.

²⁴ Saller and Bagatti (1949), 67–77, 99, fig. 8, pls. 28:3, 29:1–3; Piccirillo (1993), 40, 178, figs. 244–247.

²⁵ Piccirillo (1993), figs. 336, 370.

²⁶ Piccirillo (1993), 294, fig. 566.

Other figures hold an open book (diptych). John is portrayed among the genre scenes in the acanthus scroll carpet in the nave of the Church of the Rivers (St. Sergius) at Umm al-Rasas, and in the nave of the Church of Bishop Sergius at the same site another John holds a diptych and a flower (Fig. 6).²⁷

Protomes of a man and a woman crowned by halos, without identifying inscriptions, are incorporated in the border of the pavement in the hall of the upper Chapel of Priest John (565) at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Fig. 9). The man is aged, with a beard and a round bald patch or a monastic tonsure, and wears a *tunica laticlavia* with broad stripes and a pallium. The woman wears a tunic and a mantle (*lacerna*), fastened in the middle of her chest by a jeweled brooch. Saller and Bagatti proposed that the man should be identified as Priest John, mentioned in the adjacent inscription as being connected with the building of the chapel and the laying of the mosaic, and the woman as one of the three (Porphyria, Romē, and Maria) mentioned in the inscription in the architectural facade at the east end of the nave, as well as in the entrance of the Church of Sts. Lot and Procopius in the same village.²⁸ The figures are not realistic portraits but express an elevated social position, as do many other depictions of upper-class donors in Byzantine art.²⁹

At the east end of the nave of the Church of Priest Wa'il (586) at Umm al-Rasas is an inscription that records the construction of the church in the days of Bishop Sergius, under the supervision of Priest Wa'il; it ends with the words: "... This is the priest and his servant." The content of this inscription may perhaps help us to interpret the defaced mosaic in front of the inscription and identify the figure dressed in tunic and cloak as Priest Wa'il, standing with outstretched arms and receiving a small branch from another figure (his servant?) opposite him astride a ram. On the other side are two additional figures, each holding a staff. Another human figure facing east between the pilasters on the southeast might be a patron. The damaged figure is wearing a red cloak and holding a whip in his right hand, which is raised above his head. Although this figure is not identified by an inscription, its large size and posture tend to support its identification as a donor who was a leader of caravans,

²⁷ Piccirillo (1993), fig. 395; *Santo Stefano: mosaici* (1994), fig. 12.

²⁸ Saller and Bagatti (1949), 49–55, 173–177, 191–193, fig. 4, pls. 10:3, 34:2; Di Segni (1998), 444, 447–448, nos. 44, 51, 52.

²⁹ Brilliant (1992), 7–8, 14, 82; Hunt (1994), 120.

similar to those that appear in other churches.³⁰ In the Church of St. George (Church No. 79) at Khirbat al-Samra, protomes of donors are incorporated in the interlacing at the east end of the nave. Although the figurative depictions were damaged by iconoclasts, the associated names are partially preserved. In the center of the carpet is a dedicatory inscription: "By offering of the donor. God, You know who he is. Have mercy on him. At the time of the Archbishop Theodore [the Church] of Saint George was paved with mosaics by the care of Kasiseus, deacon and *paramonarius*." The poor condition of the mosaic does not permit us to determine whether one of the protomes depicts the deacon.³¹

Those bringing offerings are identified by name both in the nave carpets and in the borders that surround them. Like Samuel and his friends, who appear at the east end of the nave in the Church of St. Stephen at Umm al-Rasas, donors are depicted in the border of the nave carpet of the Church of the Lions (574 or 589) at the same site. They are moving among pomegranate trees, dressed in fine tunics and cloaks. Some of them, such as Paul son of Kassianus, carry baskets filled with fruit on their shoulders. An identical anonymous figure is depicted in the acanthus scrolls of the nave.³² In the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus at Gerasa (see Fig. 4), additional donors are portrayed next to the panel of the donors Theodore and Georgia. They each bring an offering of a basket full of fruit and are identified by name as John son of Astricius and Kalloeonistus.³³ The geese carried by young men, such as Georgis at Khirbat Harasah and George in Chapel B at Zay el-Gharbi,³⁴ are probably offerings as well. The bearers identified by name may be compared to the figures that accompany the personification of the Earth (Ge), depicted as anonymous youths or putti carrying baskets full of fruit. This theme is always located in the nave.

People carrying out everyday activities and identified by name appear in the nave with anonymous figures engaged in the same occupations. The eastern panel of the Church of Bishop Isaiah at Gerasa shows Konstantinos the hunter. The carpet of acanthus scrolls in the Church of the Lions at Umm al-Rasas shows John son of Saol, depicted as a soldier with a round shield and a sword facing a predator in a hunting

³⁰ Piccirillo (1993), figs. 396, 399, 400.

³¹ Piccirillo (1993), 306, figs. 593, 600–602.

³² Piccirillo (1993), 236, figs. 378, 379.

³³ Biebel (1938), 331–332, pl. LXXIII.

³⁴ Piccirillo (1993), 314, figs. 640, 661.

scene; Salaman son of Soban astride a horse with a whip in his hand; and Toemus. In Baumann's opinion, the number of figures identified by name reflects a large number of donors.³⁵ In the Church of Bishop Sergius at the same site, Barica holds a spear and defends himself against a predator leaping toward him (Fig. 6). In the nave of the Church of Deacon Thomas in the 'Uyun Musa Valley, Stephen fights a lion with a spear.³⁶

This is also the case for farmers and bird hunters. In addition to the figures identified by name in the eastern panel, similar depictions occur in the naves of churches at Umm al-Rasas. Among them, are Saul and Ulysses in the Church of the Rivers (St. Sergius), the former carrying a hoe, and John and Zongon, sons of Porphyrius, in the Church of Bishop Sergius, who are tethering an ox, the former carrying an axe and the latter a knife. The sons of Sophia are also depicted: Soel holds a whip and follows a plow to which two oxen are yoked (see Fig. 6), while Peter and John are on horseback.³⁷ John son of Soel is mentioned in a dedicatory inscription in the southern apse of the Church of the Lions,³⁸ while Soel appears in the dedicatory inscription in the panel in the northern row between two pilasters in the Church of Bishop Sergius: "O Lord, have mercy on all who toiled on this mosaic. Their names are known to You. [It was done] in the times of Soel, of Kasiseus, of Abdalla, of Obed, and of Elias, your faithful [ones]." Different names are mentioned in the dedicatory inscription placed in a special panel at the entrance to the church: "For the salvation of Sabinus, and of Theodorus his brother, and of Marinus."³⁹ We should also note Fidus and John harvesting grapes and a figure leading a camel, whose name has been erased, in a prominent panel at the west end of the nave of the Upper Church of Kaianus in the 'Uyun Musa Valley. The panel is oriented toward worshippers leaving the church. It is possible that the Fidus who appears in the panel is the deacon of the same name who is mentioned in an inscription in the southern row of columns.⁴⁰ In the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus at Khirbat Dariya/az-Za'tara/Smad, there

³⁵ Piccirillo (1993), 236, figs. 373, 376, 378, 379; Baumann (1999), 113–114.

³⁶ Piccirillo (1998), 332–342, figs. 154, 181.

³⁷ Piccirillo, *Santo Stefano: mosaici* (1994), 122–134, figs. 12, 13, 15, 17.

³⁸ Piccirillo (1992), 220, foto 46.

³⁹ Piccirillo, *Santo Stefano: mosaici* (1994), fig. 21; *Le iscrizioni di Kastron Mefaa* (1994), 259–261, inscra. 15, 18.

⁴⁰ Piccirillo (1998), 356–358, figs. 220, 223, 224.

is a depiction of Mannon leading camels.⁴¹ In the churches of Rihab, iconoclasts damaged the figures but left the names. In the Church of St. Paul (595/6), the name of Bassus son of John remains in a border and that of Somma son of John in the nave. A similar depiction and state of preservation were uncovered in the Church of St. Peter (623/4).⁴²

*The Image of the Donor in Christian Art and
Its Iconographical Significance*

A number of figures appearing in mosaics in the Land of Israel have been identified as those of donors, such as Kalliora, who is scattering coins in a church at Kissufim,⁴³ and Theodosia and Georgia in a funerary chapel in Jerusalem, one of whom holds a palm branch and the other a dove.⁴⁴

Some of these figures are depicted in the *orans* pose with raised and outspread hands, which, as noted earlier, is generally seen as a gesture of prayer that has a long tradition in antiquity. Toward the late Antiquity it expressed devotion and *pietas*.⁴⁵ The Church Fathers Nilus and Tertullian viewed the pose during prayer as an imitation of the Crucifixion and as a reflection of the Resurrection.⁴⁶ Baumann explained the *orans* figures that appear in churches as representing devout believers, as well as respected members of the community. From the fourth century onward, the *orans* pose was typical in depictions of donors to the church.⁴⁷

In Christian art, figures in *orans* pose are common from the third century onward in depictions of believers in wall paintings in catacombs and on sarcophagus reliefs in Rome,⁴⁸ Coptic funerary stelae and wall paintings,⁴⁹ and gold-glasses.⁵⁰ In early Christian art, the *orans* pose is also typical of figures participating in scenes of salvation, such as Susannah, the Three Hebrews in the Furnace, Noah Emerging from the

⁴¹ Karasneh (1997), 28–32, fig. 21.

⁴² Piccirillo (1993), figs. 627–629, 631, 633.

⁴³ Cohen (1993), 277–282, fig. on p. 280.

⁴⁴ Bagatti (1952), 146–147, 151–152, 158–160, figs. 2, 4.

⁴⁵ Leclercq (1936), 2294–2298, figs. 9075–9078.

⁴⁶ Nilus, *Epp.* 86, 87; *P.G.* LXXIX.

⁴⁷ Baumann (1999), 240–243.

⁴⁸ du Bourguet (1966), 14, 19–20, 41, 69, 80, 158.

⁴⁹ Atalla, *Coptic Art: Wall-Paintings* (1989), 14, fig. on p. 15; *Coptic Art: Sculpture and Architecture* (1989), 18, 118, nr. 178, 8004, 8018.

⁵⁰ Morey (1959), 9, 12, 18, 20, pls. V:33, VIII:48, XII:75, XIV:82–83.

Ark, and Daniel between the Lions.⁵¹ In the Land of Israel, saints are depicted in *orans* pose in a wall painting at Caesarea,⁵² and St. Menas (?) appears in the bema of the church at 'Ain Fattir.⁵³

In Cyrenaica, two personifications, Kosmesis (the new order) and Ktisis (creation, renewal), standing in *orans* pose in a facade, are depicted in the church at Ras el-Hilal; Kosmesis holding a censer also appears at Qasr el-Lebia and Cyrenaica.⁵⁴ These personifications in Cyrenaican churches may provide a key to the understanding of the depiction of donors, in *orans* pose or otherwise, in the mosaic pavements of churches in Transjordan. Moreover, Ktisis holds a palm branch like Soreg in the Chapel of Elias, Maria, and Soreg at Gerasa, and Kosmesis holds a censer like Elias; this is also the case for the donors in the Church of Bishop Isaiah, Theodore the *paramonarius* in the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus at Gerasa, and one of the donors in the Church of Bishop Sergius at Umm al-Rasas.

Incense played an important role in the Christian cult, acquiring spiritual significance by separating the sacred from the profane and accompanying the soul heavenward during prayer. We learn of the use of incense in Palestine from Egeria's account of the liturgy and rites conducted in Jerusalem:⁵⁵

After these three psalms and prayers they take censers into the cave of the Anastasis, so that the whole Anastasis basilica is filled with the smell. Then the bishop, standing inside the screen, takes the Gospel book and goes to the door...

Censers were suspended in various parts of the church and made to swing during services to fan their charcoal fires and spread the fragrance of the incense throughout the church. In Italy, deacons holding a censer are depicted in wall mosaics in the Church of St. Vitale (526–548) at Ravenna, at the Church of St. Apollinare in Classe, and in the Monastery of St. Apollo at Bawit in Egypt.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Wilpert (1929), tavv. LVII:5, CXXIX:2, CL:2. CCLV:7; (1932), tavv. CLXII:1, CLXVI:4, CLXXIV:10; du Bourguet (1966), 38, 79, 85–86, 92.

⁵² Avner (1999), 109–128, figs. 1a–2, 5.

⁵³ Chambon and Strus (1992), 425–426, 430–433, fig. 2, pl. XVII:b.

⁵⁴ Alföldi-Rosenbaum and Ward-Perkins (1980), 35–36, 123, 140–141, pls. 5:1, 83:1–2, 92:3.

⁵⁵ *Egeria*, 24.10; Baldi (1951–52), 163–226.

⁵⁶ Van Berchem and Clouzot (1924), fig. 197; Pelà (1970), 36, fig. 10; Zuntz (1935), 66, Pl. V:1.

The rare portrayal of John holding a diptych in the Church of Bishop Sergius at Umm al-Rasas is paralleled by St. Lawrence holding a codex in the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia at Ravenna.⁵⁷ Gautier di Confiengo related the figure of John holding a diptych to the celebration of the Eucharist and, more specifically, to the custom of reading the names of the saints thanks to whom God receives the sacrifice and the commemoration of the names of the deceased, as described by Cyril of Jerusalem.⁵⁸

Discussion and Conclusions

The identification of the figurative depictions as donors depends on several factors, since it would clearly be an error to identify all human figures as benefactors of the church. Members of the community are depicted as respected figures bringing offerings or engaged in everyday occupations and can also be distinguished in genre scenes. Figures dressed in ecclesiastical vestments and displaying the characteristic tonsure or holding sacred objects can be recognized as belonging to the priesthood or monastic communities. The inscriptions attest to the key role of the priesthood in the founding, building, and decoration of churches.

Figures lacking identifying details are harder to categorize, and iconoclasm has made the task even more difficult. Indisputable identification as a donor is possible only where a figure is accompanied by a name that recurs in a dedicatory inscription. Such a correspondence is found in the Church of St. Paul at Umm al-Rasas (see Fig. 5), where there is definite proof that the figures appearing in the eastern panel of the naves are the donors commemorated in the dedicatory inscription in front of the bema. Sergis the *paramonarius*, holding a censer, stands among trees with Rabbus and his son Paul, who are picking fruit. The same names appear in a dedicatory inscription noting the names of the donors:

For the memory and the repose [of...and of...Sergis and]...and for the salvation and the remittance of sins of Rabbus [...] of Paul and his

⁵⁷ Deichmann (1958), taf. 5, 7.

⁵⁸ Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catecheses*, V. 6–9; Gautier di Confiengo (2000), 446.

children, for their health all this work was terminated [...in the month] of July of the twelfth indiction.⁵⁹

Can we draw conclusions from this example that are valid for all of the Transjordanian churches? Not necessarily, since every case must be considered individually. However, the location of relatively large figures in a special panel at the east end of the nave supports the identification of the figures as donors, even in the absence of corroborative inscriptive evidence.

It is likely that clerics and members of the congregation identified by name and depicted in geometric and vegetal nets decorating the carpet of the nave, as well as sometimes in its border, are donors, distinguished in this way from figures appearing in the genre scenes. In this case, the mention of the name, rather than the position, is the feature that identifies the donor. The mosaic craftsman placed the figures of the donors, with only three exceptions, within the general program of the nave rather than in the liturgical space. The eastern panel of the nave in front of the bema emphasizes the difference between sacred and profane and establishes a suitable pause in front of the bema, which is raised and demarcated by a chancel screen. However, it also links the area intended for the congregation with the enclosed liturgical area restricted to the clergy.

The choice of program and motifs is not random. The eastern panel containing depictions of human figures among trees is paralleled in liturgical areas, which usually feature depictions of symbolic animals, but sometimes include human figures as well. The trees were understood as representing Paradise, which the worshippers aspired to attain. Grabar believed that donors and inscriptions mentioning their names appear so frequently in the eastern panel because this is where they made their offerings and the deacons recorded their names. This is a significant location, and the depictions attest to an early Christian cultic practice that took place in the church.⁶⁰

Generosity—*Euergesia* (εὐεργεσία) or *Filotimia* (φιλοτιμία)—was particularly valued by the Christian society and church, which emphasized its appellations, qualities, and virtues, and the role of the individual, a concept that originated in the Roman world. The inscriptions in the mosaic pavements of Transjordan attest to the cooperation of several

⁵⁹ Piccirillo (1997), 382–392, pianta I, fig. 5, fotos 2, 3, 25–27.

⁶⁰ Grabar (1962), 134.

patrons in the building of churches. This indicates that communities did not include a member who was sufficiently wealthy to finance the building and decoration, but there is a parallel emphasis on community values and the presentation of the building as a cooperative effort.

The clergy and congregation joined forces to build and decorate the churches. Comparison of the mosaics of Transjordan and Cyrenaica shows that there is a clear connection between donors, founders, or overseers of the construction and renovation of churches and personifications of “Creation” and “Foundation.” In fact, a connection is made between divine and human creation, expressed by the pose common to the human figures and the personifications involved in foundation and renewal and to the saints, martyrs, and figures that achieve salvation.

The link between divine and human creation was noted by the Church Fathers.⁶¹ Bishop Basil of Seleucia (fourth century) wrote:⁶²

[Man] . . . as if sitting on a throne, shows the image of the Creator through the dignity of his works, imitating his Maker with his own actions as with colors. For man puts his own hand to creating, and desires to fabricate, and constructs houses, and fits together boats, and joins beds, and constructs tables, and thus playing at creation he imitates the hands of the Maker.

In the same period, Theodoretus Cyrrhensis, the bishop of a city near Antioch, wrote in his commentary on Genesis: “Man imitates the God who made him by building dwellings, walls, towns, harbors, boats, dockyards, chariots, and countless other things.”⁶³ Saller noted that an inscription in the Theotokos Chapel on Mount Nebo refers to “Christ the God, Creator and Maker of all Things” and those whose efforts realized the completion of the church, and stated that the comparison of divine and human creation was part of the Byzantine liturgy of the dedication of churches at the same time.⁶⁴

Donations and donors are mentioned in the liturgy. Bagatti noted that donations to the church were made to gain spiritual recompense, as well as to finance the activities of the clergy among the poor of the congregation. *The Canons Apostolic* states:

All the donations should be brought to the bishop, the priests, and the deacons for food for the clergy. In general the tithe is intended to feed

⁶¹ Maguire (1987), 48–49.

⁶² Basil of Seleucia, *Oratio* 1 (PG 85:36).

⁶³ Theodoretus Cyrrhensis, *Questiones in Genesim* I, 20 (PG 80:105).

⁶⁴ Saller (1941), 255–256.

the clergy, for maidens, for widows, and for all the poor. But the first donations are intended for the deacons and the priests.

It is emphasized that one should not bring to the altar honey, birds, or any kind of livestock, but rather ripe grain, grapes in season, oil for lamps, and incense.⁶⁵

In the opinion of Saller and Bagatti, the depictions in the mosaics correspond to the donations that are mentioned in the *Euchologium*: “Our Lord and Father, who has commanded each of us to offer to you what we owe you, from what you have given us. By this donation you give to us joy and riches, receive from your servants this offering.”⁶⁶ The clergy thanked the donors, as in the *Liturgy of St. James*: “All those who make good donations and do good deeds in the Church of God, who help the poor, widows, orphans, sojourners, and the unfortunate, we thank them.” Thus too John Chrysostom: “We pray for those who donate fruits and those who work for the good of this holy and respected church.”⁶⁷

The presence of donors, then, is expressed both in the dedicatory inscriptions and in the depiction of donors accompanied by their names. The portrayal of the pious donor and his donation will ensure his salvation. Trees and the *orans* pose of several of the donors express belief in future redemption or a prayer for the salvation of the soul in Paradise.

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⁶⁵ *The Canons Apostolic*, I.59, II. 2–4 (PG 1:659–666, 1125–1128); Bagatti (1957), 156.

⁶⁶ *Euchologium* (PO 24, 673); Saller and Bagatti (1949), 101; Bagatti (1957), 147.

⁶⁷ *Liturgy of St. James* (PO 26, 186–187); Joannes Chrysostomus, *De Meester*, 46–47; Bagatti (1957), 147–148.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Khirbat al-Samra: Church of St. Peter.
- Fig. 2. Khirbat Dariya/az-Za'tara/Smad: The bema of the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus: anonymous donors.
- Fig. 3. Gerasa: The bema of Chapel of Elias, Maria; and Soreg: Elias, Maria, and Soreg.
- Fig. 4. Gerasa, Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus (533): Theodore the *paramonarius*; Georgia: John son of Astricius and Kalloeonistus.
- Fig. 5. Umm al-Rasas, Church of St. Paul (second half of the sixth century): Sergis and Rabbus.
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- Fig. 7. Umm al-Rasas, Church of St. Stephen: Samuel, Abib son of Zugon, Kaium monk of Phisga, and John.
- Fig. 8. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, Church of St. George: John son of Ammonius.
- Fig. 9. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, Upper Chapel of the Priest John (565).

JOHANNES OF GAZA'S *TABULA MUNDI* REVISITED

Rina Talgam

Johannes of Gaza's famous ekphrasis that describes a painting or mosaic depicting the world (ἐκφρασις τοῦ κοσμικοῦ πίνακος) was meticulously studied by two great scholars as early as the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1912, Paul Friedländer translated the text into German, discussed it exhaustively, and even suggested a reconstruction of the lost painting or mosaic (Fig. 1).¹ Later on, in 1920, Gerhard Krahmer published his comprehensive essay on the poem that included an alternative reconstruction (Fig. 2).² Following Princeton University's extensive excavations at Antioch, which exposed mosaics containing personifications of elements of the cosmos, Glanville Downey in 1938 and Doro Levi in 1944 reexamined specific parts of the ekphrasis.³ In 1945, Karl Lehmann included it in his composition "The Dome of Heaven," in which he clarified the antique and late-antique background of the Christian portrayals of heaven depicted on domes.⁴ Despite the great importance of Johannes of Gaza's ekphrasis to the study of Hellenism in late antiquity, and in Palestine in particular, somehow it was laconically and only rarely discussed in the scholarly literature of the latter half of the twentieth century. The sole exception is Carolina Cupane's attempt to revise and complete Krahmer's suggested reconstruction of the lost painting (Fig. 3).⁵ The ekphrasis and the work of art it describes merit our attention and reconsideration in light of recent essays concerning the dialogue between Christianity and the Hellenistic heritage, as well as of some archaeological findings that were not taken into account in earlier studies of the ekphrasis.

¹ Friedländer (1912); Friedländer (1969), 135–224.

² Krahmer (1920).

³ Downey (1938), 205–212; Levi (1944), 269–314.

⁴ Lehmann (1945), 1–27.

⁵ Cupane (1979), 195–207. Few comments are comprised also in the recent research by Renaut (2005), 197–220.

Johannes of Gaza was one of the leading teachers of grammar and rhetoric in that city during the reign of Justinian. A few of his works have survived, including a collection of six Anacreonic poems written to celebrate public occasions in Gaza. The Alexandrian school and the style of Nonnus heavily influenced his poems.⁶ The ekphrasis describing the world through personification is the longest among his surviving works, comprising 703 hexameters and divided into two parts, each prefaced by a short introduction. The first part was probably delivered in the theater in front of the citizens of his city in the morning hours and the second in the afternoon of the same day. There is no indication in the text itself of the function or location of the building that housed the work of art. Nevertheless, the scholia on the ekphrasis (the source of which is unknown) indicate that the described piece was located in a winter public bath. A brief note at the beginning of the poem mentions that it was in Gaza, and this information is repeated once more in the scholia, but the words “in Gaza” are followed by “or in Antioch.”⁷

The text presents a series of difficulties. The Greek is poetic, so that in many places the translation is only paraphrased and thus open to interpretation. Both Friedländer’s and Krahmer’s attempts at reconstructing the picture described in the ekphrasis reveal that it is hard to know how systematic Johannes was in presenting the sequence of fifty figures shown in the picture. The differences between the two proposed reconstructions do not lie only in Friedländer’s assumption that it was on a wall and in Krahmer’s conjecture that it was placed in a dome, but rather stem from the brevity of the text concerning this point. As the mediator between the work of art and his audience, Johannes is preoccupied with providing other explanations and pointing out the aesthetic features of the work; the exact location of each of the various figures does not interest him as much as it interests us. Jas Elsner notes that the ekphrasis is more than just a simple description of a work of art; it is also an interpretation and elaboration that gives the audience tools for the “right and proper” appreciation of art.⁸ Other queries to be resolved in this regard are: What was the location of the picture described by Johannes—Gaza or Antioch? Was it a mosaic or a painting? Was it

⁶ Glucker 1987, 52; Cameron (1993), 348–351.

⁷ Downey (1938), 206–208; Cameron 1993, 348–351.

⁸ Elsner (1995), 28–29.

new when Johannes wrote his ekphrasis? Were the Christian motifs an integral part of the original work of art, or is it possible that the figures Johannes describes as angels and a cross were not Christian figures at all but rather winged pagan personifications and a decorative motif to which he assigned Christian significance?

I return to these questions after a brief presentation of the ekphrasis and the work of art it describes. The poem opens (lines 1–25) with Johannes's confession that he has chosen to discuss a topic that he realizes is fraught with difficulties. The professors had warned him, but he nevertheless persevered in his ambitious task. His worrisome undertaking was followed by sleepless nights. The painting, according to Johannes, is a work in which the inaccessible is made intelligible by the use of images. Following upon the artist, he tries to make it visible—not with brushstrokes or mosaic cubes, but with his own words. The audience should not blame him for being presumptuous, as he is not the creator, just the mediator. He praises his listeners, declares his full confidence in their ability to appreciate the grandeur of the picture and asks for their tolerance and support.

The aim of Johannes's preface is twofold; on the one hand, he tries to close the gap between himself (the orator) and his listeners. He is not the remote and removed scholar, but rather someone who requires the full cooperation of his audience. On the other hand, he prepares his listeners for the difficulties that await them in the long journey on which they are about to embark.

The artist in his choice to use images and the rhetor-observer in his desire to give an account of those images both follow Plato's use of myth to explain cosmology. In his *Timaeus* (40d), Plato found it impossible to explain the movement of the celestial bodies without a "visible representation": "to attempt to tell of all this without a visible representation of the celestial system would be labour in vain" (). The maker of the cosmos in the myth he recounts is called a *dēmiourgos*, meaning craftsman. Appeal to the rich legacy of *Timaeus* throughout antiquity and during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance is a well-known phenomenon. Johannes of Gaza, like all the educated people of his time, knew it well and even referred to it in the ekphrasis, although not directly, as I claim later on.

The preface is followed by a double introduction. The first one (part I, lines 1–18) opens with the *phantasia* Johannes envisioned upon seeing the work of art. The origin of this term has been ascribed to the

“Middle Stoa,” and it implies that the finest artistic creations are those that convey spiritually uplifting qualities.⁹ The great achievement of an artist is his ability to visualize the sublime. Art is more than a simple imitation (*mimēsis*), and the role of the artist is not only to give physical form to his spiritual insight but also to deliver it to the viewers. Johannes dramatically describes to his audience how the voices of the Sirens and the Muses lift him upward. Apollo turns him around in an intensive dance of words, pushing him up to heaven and convincing him to love poetry. As a result, he dances and sings about the creation; with bravery and sensibility he celebrates in verse all the forces of nature—the stars, heaven, earth, water, sun, moon, storm, cloud, bird, angel, air, night, and sea. He then directs his discourse to Apollo and the Muses, asking for their inspiration while being bombarded by the heavy rain of song.

As indicated by Elsner in his analysis of Philostratus's *Imagines*, ekphrasis is essentially concerned with evoking the vividness of the artistic vision. The rhetor-observer is no longer a simple describer or even interpreter; he has become an inventor, the author of his own story.¹⁰

This is the only part of Johannes's ekphrasis in which we witness a crossing of boundaries between observer and observed. Nowhere else do we find a union of realities between beholder and images as we do, for example, in the *Imagines* of Philostratus or in the ekphrasis *eikonos* of Procopius of Gaza, where the rhetor-observer actually finds himself speaking directly to the figures depicted in the paintings, as if they were alive.¹¹ The variance in approach stems from the different character of the subjects and purposes of the pictures. This does not contradict the vitality of the figures that is achieved by the stylistic features mentioned by Johannes and by directing the viewer's attention to minute details, for example, the drops of sweat dripping down the face of the personification of summer. One should also take note of the fact that Johannes does not mention any personification in the introduction but lists only the forces of nature, the sole exception being the figure of an angel.

In the second part of the introduction (part I, lines 19–28), Johannes addresses his speech to God, the Creator of all things born from God, the Lord of the universe, the Creator of the order of time, the roots of

⁹ Pollitt (1990), 5–8, 224; Brilliant (1984), 76–78; Elsner (1995), 26–27; Perry (2005), 150–171; Elsner 2007, 186–188.

¹⁰ Elsner (1995), 31–32.

¹¹ Talgam (2004), 209–234.

all life, a Father who gave birth without a sin. Johannes asks for God's help and announces that his speech opens with a supplication to God via the symbol of the Passion.

The double introduction reflects Johannes's dual identity. He was a Christian scholar who saw Classical literature and art as an integral part of his own tradition. His rhetoric continues the aesthetic values and conventions of Classical works and thus relates to Apollo and the Muses. His sympathy for Classical culture is entirely compatible with his sincere commitment to Christianity.¹² Moreover, in the twofold introduction Johannes presents in a condensed form the entire process he has just gone through—from the material to the spiritual and from the infinitely divided world to a single, undivided intelligible first principle. The visible things (the stars, heaven, earth, water, sun, moon, storm, cloud, bird, angel, air, night, and sea) have raised him to the recognition of God. The ekphrasis of Johannes, like the *Tabula* of Cebes, is a philosophic allegory of a picture that leads to a mystical initiation and enlightenment.¹³ Johannes clearly refers to that in lines I, 8–9, where the poetic inspiration offered by Apollo, the Muses, and the Sirens is a sort of Bacchic frenzy, whereas the Christian God provides him with a “more intellectual breath” (I, 25).¹⁴

The description of the picture itself begins with the golden cross set against three blue concentric circles (part I, lines 29–44). Johannes interprets the three circles as symbols of the Trinity and a representation of the heavenly sphere:

The auspicious image (*typos*) of the spiritual Trinity surrounds [the cross] with dark blue whirls; it [the Trinity] is inscribed in circles which are like a representation of the celestial sphere (*polou*). And inside it is possible to observe the holy brightness of both arms [of the cross].¹⁵

Through Johannes's interpretation of the three circles, Henry Maguire notes the ambiguity of symbolism in Byzantine art and shows that a single motif can be charged with more than one meaning. The description

¹² This well-known phenomenon has been discussed by various scholars, such as Weitzmann (1951) and Bowersock (1993).

¹³ Elsner 2007, 185–190.

¹⁴ Ciccolella 2006, 85–90. Ciccolella also refers to the use of the term initiation to mysteries in relation to literary studies by other intellectuals in late antiquity.

¹⁵ English translation by Maguire (1987), 12.

of the cross at the beginning of this section is no less interesting and is discussed in detail later.¹⁶

The description of the cross is followed by an account on the figure of Uranus (part I, lines 44–51). Old Uranus stands surrounded by clouds that hide the lower portion of his body; his long curly hair falls to his shoulders and his arms are stretched outward. Johannes says that Uranus plucked the disc of the sun from his heart and transferred it to the place where it rises. Both Friedländer and Krahmer consider the birth of the sun from Uranus's heart an account of an earlier action that immediately preceded the one depicted. Johannes felt the need to add it in order to clarify the origin of the sun.

Next (Fig. 4) is a detailed description of the sun's disc (part I, 51–65). In the middle of the solar disc stands a naked child, which, Johannes explains, is the image of the rising sun. At midday the sun is personified by a young man and at sunset by an old man about to die. The idea that the sun god ages as he crosses the sky each day originated in ancient Egypt.¹⁷ The sun, Johannes insists, represents both the righteous and the atheist.

The progression of the newborn sun is guided by twin female figures—Sophia, personification of wisdom, and Arete (Ἀρετή), symbol of goodness, excellence, or virtue (part I, lines 66–95). They sit on either side of the morning sun, Sophia on the right and Arete on the left, holding the disc of fire in their hands.

To this group belongs the figure of Atlas (part I, lines 96–125), who supports the disc surrounding the image of the child: “In order to raise his fiery burden, Atlas stands stooped, holding near his temples the life-prolonging sparks, bending his head aside and, with his hands uplifted, his neck turned sideways, stretching his tired limbs, taking care thus to lighten his load. As though equipped for toil, he is lightly clad, covered only by a kilt around his waist.” His legs are crossed and planted on the ground. Atlas's physical description ends with a reference to the world's axis and its four cardinal points. The passage is essential for a complete understanding of the significance of the ekphrasis:

The governing Word curved the sky as an endless sphere, and by will of the same Word the earth is suspended within it as the center of the sphere. From the north stands unshaken its axis, equally balanced, rectilinear,

¹⁶ On the cosmic cross see also Maguire (1987), 29; Ladner (1995), 99–101.

¹⁷ Hornung (1990), 89.

supporting nature, piercing the sphere from pole to pole and affixed to both poles. Upright, it pins the earth and holds it tight, and Atlas in his enduring and tireless eternal strength stands as this steadfast axis. The tips of the axis are fixed in the fiery pole near the southern end and in the dry frozen vault of the north. The starry pole of the North which is always visible in the luminous rotations of the supernal sphere they call the right pole, and the fiery south pole near to the ground bare of stars, which runs invisibly, the left pole....

In the next ten lines (part I, lines 126–136), Johannes returns to the figures holding the sun, Sophia and Arete. The verses in which he relates to the sun are of utmost importance for an understanding of the group:

But also the wanderer son of glowing Orient, Phaethon the bringer of light, established the generation of Harmony; and giving heed to the center of the intellectually perceptible of the circle track of the world, with his generative spark he keeps every thing flowing around....¹⁸

Johannes feels the need to reiterate the fact that the sun is directed by Sophia and Arete and supported by Atlas: "...they fixed a disc to the axis so that Atlas rooted in the ground might the better attend constantly to lifting the prince of ether, himself driving the world's charioteer." But this time he elaborates on the essence and qualities of Sophia, noting that she rules all the spiritual laws, the primeval ones; being constantly close to God, she fastens the diverse parts of the universe. Johannes ends her characterization by calling her the mother of the art of the Muses.

It is obvious that the description of Aion follows the rendering of the sun (part I, lines 137–179). He is conceived as another supreme principle of the universe and is a manifestation of endless time. Aion, as indicated by Johannes, causes one year to discharge itself into another and thus keeps the rhythm of the world and sustains life. In the picture from Gaza, he is sitting in splendor on Mount Olympus. Johannes calls him "forefather," although he appears as a youth. Wearing a purple robe that covers only the lower half of his body, he grasps the upper end of his robe with his left hand and rests his right hand on his thigh. In contrast to many other depictions of Aion from late antiquity, the hand gestures do not indicate that he is turning a wheel; nor does he mention

¹⁸ English translation by Levi (1944), 298 note 79. The only deviation from his translation is my preference to follow Friedländer's translation and use the term "circle track" (*Kreisbahn*) instead of "wheel."

a ring with the signs of the zodiac, but Johannes does vaguely remark that the figure of Aion is decorated with many symbols.

Johannes then describes Hesperus (the evening star), Selene, Oceanus, Bythos, Eos, the Horai, Ge with the *Karpoi*, Aroura, Thalassa, Cheimon (winter), thunder and lightning, Iris, Phosphoros (the morning star), Orthros (daybreak) and Anatole (sunrise), Nyx, and the four seasons of the year.¹⁹

The ekphrasis ends with an account of a unique group of three figures (Fig. 6): Cosmos, Physis, and Aither (part II, lines 314–343). Aither (Αἰθήρ)—the personification of the purer upper stratum of air, identical with the sky—is portrayed as a winged figure wearing a crown of fire. Like a flying Victory, he holds another crown over the head of the personification of Cosmos. Johannes explains that Cosmos keeps the harmony and balance in the world; he carries the measures of cyclical time and in his wisdom keeps watch on everything. Physis is represented by a defeated lion. Cosmos places one foot on top of the animal, assuming the triumphant pose of the traditional big-game hunter; in his left hand he holds a palm branch, and his right hand is outstretched toward Aither. Johannes interprets the four fingers pointing upward as symbols of the four elements (fire, earth, air, and water); the bent thumb signifies their combination into a single whole. In the last sentence, Johannes mentions briefly the creation of humanity.

I now return to the main questions elicited by Johannes of Gaza's ekphrasis. Limitation of space prevents me from dealing at length with all of them, so I focus on an exploration of what seems to me to be the most interesting query. I prefer to discuss the ekphrasis as an historical document and to leave aside for the moment its value as an archaeological source. The attempts to reconstruct the lost painting and to determine its exact technique and location are indeed important. I have spent many hours studying the Friedländer and the Krahmer's reconstructions (see Figs. 1 and 2) against Johannes's text and must admit that at a certain point I even tried to offer my own revision of their suggestions. I now realize not only how difficult the task is, but have also come to the conclusion that the moving of a figure from right to left or from top to bottom is not very crucial to our understanding of

¹⁹ Owing to the limited space, I have decided to focus on the opening and final parts of the ekphrasis that are essential to its understanding. The middle section (part I, line 180 through part II, line 313) appears in the appendix.

the cultural meaning of the painting and the ekphrasis. Nevertheless, I have found the main features of Krahmer's reconstruction, as well as his suggestion to locate the painting within a dome, more convincing.

A comparison to other cosmological depictions from late antiquity reveals that the supreme principle of the universe should be the focal point of the composition, and therefore the golden cross set against the three blue concentric circles should be placed in the center. Moreover, the assumption that the picture decorated a hemispherical ceiling continues a long tradition of the dome serving as a symbol of the cosmos. The medallion with the cross would thus replace the *oculus* that allows the light to penetrate the temple, just as Vitruvius had once prescribed for temples to Jupiter, Sol, and Selene (*De Archit.* 1.2.5). God the Creator and Maker of all things transcends the world. In his description of Atlas, Johannes mentions the four cardinal directions of the cross remarking that "...Atlas...stands as this steadfast axis."²⁰ Therefore, it is most reasonable to assume that his orientation corresponds fully with the vertical arm of the cross. Further on in that passage, Johannes indicates that "the starry pole of the North...they call the right pole...and the fiery south pole...the left pole..." Atlas and the rising sun designate the east and Nyx represents the west.

Cupane's proposal (see Fig. 3) that the dome was divided by the cross into four quadrants in accordance with the cardinal points and her suggestion that the personifications were distributed in three concentric bands are also attractive.²¹ Cupane was inspired by the description of the house of Harmony in Nonnus of Panopolis' *Dionysiaca* (XLI, 277–288). It is described there as εἰκόνα κόσμου, circular in shape, with four portals facing the points of the compass, protected by four handmaidens, bearing names that mean: Rising (at the gate of the East), Setting (at the West), She of Midday (at the South), and Arctos the Bear (at the North). My reservation concerning this suggestion is that it ignores the positioning of Atlas and the sun on the straight line continuing the vertical arm of the cross.

Friedländer's collection of casual references to the details of the picture's execution indicates that the fresco rather than the mosaic was

²⁰ In Part I, lines 35–37 he also says: "Four extremities grew [out of the cross], because the primeval age was east, west, south, and north, having accomplished the holding together of the world from these four." English translation by Maguire (1987), 29.

²¹ Cupane (1979), 195–207.

the medium of the depiction.²² The only evidence for the possibility that it was a mosaic is its golden cross and durable color, features that Johannes clearly emphasizes.

In regard to the possibility that the picture was located in Antioch and not in Gaza, I do not accept Downey's theory that the mosaic in Bath E at Antioch tips the balance in favor of that city.²³ As Levi has already demonstrated, the similarity between the mosaic and the group of Ge, the Karpoi, and Aroura in the work under discussion does not prove the use of the same model. Ludwig's argument—that since Johannes lived in Gaza it is most probable that a monument he described existed in that city—is the most logical.²⁴ This is reinforced by his claim that the uncertainty in the scholia regarding the location of the bath, in Gaza or in Antioch, appears only once and seems to have been an addition.

A Greek epigram inscribed on a marble slab that was discovered out of its original context in Old Beersheba indicates the existence of at least one similar representation of the cosmos in another place in Palestine at that time. The inscription, dated to the sixth century, consists of eight lines: "Eyes, what marvel is this? When was the Cosmos created here? What mortal devised a beauty that infinite time never (revealed) afore? Antipater made these, and showed Heaven band by band, when he held in his hands the reins of the armies dear to Ares." Antipater should probably be identified with the *dux Palaestinae*.²⁵

Johannes's ekphrasis and the depiction it describes are interesting because they reflect the encounter between Christian thought and the Classical tradition. Both works are a blend of cosmology, natural theology, and aesthetics, and provide us with an opportunity to trace the interaction of Christianity and Hellenism not only in the field of visual language but within a wider cultural spectrum as well.

The *tabula mundi* from Gaza continues a Hellenistic and Roman tradition of allegorical depictions of the cosmos in various artistic

²² Friedländer (1969), 220–222.

²³ Cameron also locates the picture at Antioch and suggests as a terminus *ante quem* for the work the year 526, when Antioch was destroyed by earthquake; Cameron (1993), 348–351.

²⁴ Cited by Downey (1938), 207.

²⁵ Di Segni (1997), 703–707; I would like to thank her for drawing my attention to this inscription. Another example from Palestina and Arabia is a dome resembling the vault of heaven in a *calidarium* at Qusayr 'Amra, dated to the Umayyad period Saxl (1932), 289–303.

media. Among the well-known examples are the Tazza Farnese,²⁶ the decoration of the cuirass on the sculpture of Augustus from Prima Porta,²⁷ the Parabagio plate,²⁸ and representations on mosaic floors, the most impressive one being from Shahba-Philippopolis (now in the National Museum of Damascus) dated to the second half of the third century,²⁹ and the mosaic in the House of the Mithraeum in Emerita (Mérida), Spain, dated between the late-second and third centuries.³⁰ The allegorical mosaic from Shahba-Philippopolis (Fig. 7) includes Ge with the Karpoi, Triptolemos (inventor of agriculture), Georgia (agriculture), Dew (represented by two putti pouring water from jars labeled *drosoi*), the four winds, Aion (the personification of Eternity), and the four seasons. On the right-hand side of this panel, Prometheus sits modeling the first man from clay (*Protoplastos*), while Hermes holds the little soul, Psyche; beside him is an unnamed draped figure, probably another form of the soul, that which is united with the body during life. Katherine M. D. Dunbabin has suggested the possibility that the mosaic is a reproduction of a painting.³¹

The cosmological allegory is also complex and dense in the Mérida mosaic (Fig. 8). At the top are Caelum (the Heavens) supported by Polum (the pole), together with Saeculum (time, epoch) and Chaos. Then appear figures of the atmosphere—the Winds and Clouds, the rising Sun on his chariot (Oriens), and the setting Moon (Occasus). Further down are the personifications of Nature (Natura) and a Mountain (Mons) with Snow. The center is damaged, but it is clear that it showed the figure of Eternity, as indicated by the fragmentary inscription: *Aet[ernitas]*, allied with the Seasons (of which Summer and Autumn have survived). At the bottom lies a series of figures associated with water, including Ocean, the River Nile, Euphrates, a female personification of plenty (Copia) and a female personification of shipping (Navigia). At the bottom center appears Portus, and beneath him a youth with a torch labeled Pharus (lighthouse). Elisabeth Alföldi-Rosenbaum suggests

²⁶ Dwyer (1992), 283–300.

²⁷ Hannestad (1988), 50–56.

²⁸ Toynbee and K. S. Painter (1986), 29–30.

²⁹ Will (1953), 27–48; Balty 1977, 28–29; Immerzeel (1999), 63–71.

³⁰ Quet (1981); for more bibliography, see Dunbabin (1999), 147–150; see also Álvarez Martínez ed. (1996).

³¹ Álvarez Martínez ed. (1996), 166–169.

that the model for the cosmic mosaic at Mérida was a Hellenistic painting from Alexandria.³²

A comparison of the picture in the bathhouse of Gaza with late Roman pagan cosmic depictions will help us understand some modifications and innovations of the Classical tradition that we find in Gaza. The mythological gods and goddesses that do not signify the forces of nature are entirely absent in Gaza. In the center of the dome, in the place usually reserved for the supreme cosmic element or the main deity, is a gilded cross within a frame of three blue concentric rings. Aion, which in the Mérida mosaic is the dominant and central figure, has been pushed aside. The appearance of the cross imparts Christian significance to the entire cosmic depiction. The choice to depict the cross and not the figure of Jesus (God incarnate) was meant to emphasize the difference between it and the other figures. The cross in the center of the cosmic dome represents a Divinity that is essentially metaphysical but finds expression in the Creation, an invisible God differing in His essence from every pagan idol. As indicated in the Epistle to the Romans 1:20: “For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead....”³³ Johannes presents this interpretation in the Christian introduction to his ekphrasis.

However, Johannes’s description of the cross also hints at something else. The detailed account of the shape of the cross is not a conscious effort to show that the decorative motif in the center of the dome was a cross, as claimed by Downey. Rather, it describes how the short horizontal strip joins the long vertical one, how its appellation as “the strip of love” was produced out of necessity as God’s sign for peace, and how the interpretation given to the three circles as signifying the heavenly sphere (in addition to their meaning as the Trinity) brings to mind the myth told by Plato in his *Timaeus*. That work is the most important dialogue dealing with the doctrine of the Creation; in fact, all early Christian theologians refer to it in their explanations.

For the first time, Plato introduces into philosophy the image of a creator god (Demiurge), a human craftsman who worked on materials that he did not create but whose inherent nature limited his desire for

³² Alföldi-Rosenbaum (1993), 255–274.

³³ Finney (1994), 278 refers to the treatise of Theophilus of Antioch.

perfection.³⁴ The function of the Demiurge was to contribute an element of order in Becoming, because an ordered world would be more “like himself,” that is to say, better than a disorderly one.³⁵

Let me tell you then why the creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good can never have any jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be. This is in the truest sense the origin of creation and of the world, as we shall do well in believing the testimony of wise men: God desired that all things should be good and nothing bad, so far as this was attainable.³⁶

The Demiurge in *Timaeus* is not a religious figure, and nowhere is it suggested that he should be an object of worship. Therefore, he must not be equated with the one God of the Bible who created the world *ex nihilo* and is also the supreme object of worship.³⁷

The special attitude of the early Christian theologians to Plato is clearly reflected in the writings of Eusebius. As Aryeh Kofsky has demonstrated, Eusebius considered Plato the greatest Greek philosopher and the closest to having attained the truths of Christianity.³⁸ Platonic philosophy was in harmony with Scripture. He knew the Holy Trinity and even prophesied the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus. Eusebius admired and respected him, despite the fact that Plato was occasionally wrong and did not reach the practical conclusions suggested by his ideas. Eusebius says that Plato was the only Greek who recognized the concept of the creating *Logos*.³⁹ We read the following description in the Platonic text:

This entire compound he divided lengthways into two parts, which he joined to one another at the center like the letter X, and bent them into a circular form, connecting them with themselves and each other at the point opposite to their original meeting point; and, comprehending them in a uniform revolution upon the same axis, he made the one the outer and the other the inner circle. Now the motion of the outer circle

³⁴ Cornford (1952), 34.

³⁵ Cornford (1952), 37.

³⁶ Plato, *Timaeus*, 29e–30a.

³⁷ Nevertheless, *δημιουργός* is an acclamation of Christ in dedicatory inscriptions in churches; e.g., in the Theotokos chapel on Mt. Nebo; Saller (1941), 255–256.

³⁸ Kofsky (2000), 282–286.

³⁹ *Praeparatio Evangelica* 11–13; *The Theophany* II, 24–46.

he called the motion of the same, and the motion of the inner circle the motion of the other or diverse.⁴⁰

The two circles created by the connecting lines are thus analogous to the heavenly equator and to the zodiac circle. Like Eusebius and other Christian theologians, such as the Three Cappadocians—Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus—Johannes of Gaza also reiterates this dialogue in order to teach the doctrine of the Creation.⁴¹ As I demonstrate below, he again refers to *Timaeus* in the last part of his ekphrasis. He also relates to the cross as the symbol of the Passion, thereby indicating that God not only created the world but also completed it through Salvation.

The sun group—which, as noted, includes Uranus, who plucked the sun disc from his heart; Atlas, who carried the sun on his shoulders; and Sophia and Arete, who guided its course—is, I believe, the key to understanding the significance of the *tabula mundi* depicted in the bathhouse in Gaza. This depiction is unusual in comparison to known portrayals of the sun god in late antiquity, in which he is seen riding in his heavenly chariot, which is drawn by four horses. Why do his sisters, Selena and Eos, appear on the chariot when their older brother, Helios, was taken off it? Moreover, Atlas usually supports the heavens and not a disc containing the sun. In yet another unusual respect, this is the depiction that appears on the Parabiago plate, where Atlas supports young Aion, who is embraced by the zodiac circle. The appearance of Sophia and Arete beside him has no parallels in known visual art. How are we to explain this?

This complex group has several layers of significance. The source of the sun in Uranus's heart is reminiscent of the innocent birth of the son (the god who became mortal) by his father. In the New Testament, light is a metaphor for Christ. Thus, the first chapter of the Gospel of John states:

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (1:6–9).⁴²

⁴⁰ Plato, *Timaeus*, 36b–c.

⁴¹ Callahan (1993), 217–234; Pelikan (1993), 95–96.

⁴² On the sun or light as a symbol of Christ in Christian thought, see Dölger (1940), 51–56; Kantorowicz (1963), 135–145.

It should be noted that Uranus is the only personification in which the lower half of the body is hidden by clouds. Was this intentional so as to suggest the father's invisibility? It is not coincidental that in this part of the ekphrasis Johannes refrained entirely from using the name Helios and instead called the young sun Phaethon, the son of Helios.⁴³ This interpretation, however, does not explain the absence of the chariot and the appearance of Sophia and Arete. I suggest that these features stem from an awareness that these issues—the danger of adopting the sun cult and the wish to avoid the pagan mistake of confusing the celestial bodies established by God with the Creator—are easily misunderstood. The power of the cult of Sol Invictus, the invincible sun, in the late Roman period and the revival of such worship by the emperor Julian call for especial caution.

The fourth-century Cappadocians were particularly sensitive to this distinction, and Basil of Caesarea indicates that even the majesty of the sun pointed not to itself, but beyond itself, to “the *sophia* of the Creator with the *techne*.” *Techne* (τέχνη) means skill of making—an art or craft; *Sophia* (Wisdom) is identified with *Logos*.⁴⁴ Gregory of Nyssa says “that nothing happens without God we know from many sources; and, conversely, that God’s *economy* has no element of *techne* and irrationality in it, everyone will allow who realizes that God is reason, and *sophia*, and perfect *arete*, and truth.”⁴⁵

The *Wisdom of Solomon* (7, 29) has the following to say on divine wisdom: “For she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the order of stars: being compared with the light, she is found before it.” *Sophia* and *arete* are by no means attributes of the sun; on the contrary, they deny the divinity of the sun. The appearance of *sophia* and *arete* as attributes of God, and not of the sun, were meant to create the distinction intended by the Church Fathers. Basil of Caesarea elaborates on this issue, remarking that someone who has “studied the marvels of light” could have the experience of being “raised by visible things to the invisible being.” Gregory of Nyssa repeats this idea with a slight variation, saying that to “observe the beauty of the material sunlight” is to “grasp by analogy the beauty of the real sunlight,” namely God.⁴⁶ This attitude

⁴³ The myth of Phaeton is also told by Nonnus, *Dionysiaca*, XXXVIII, 108–432. The mythological story there is combined with a detailed description of the cosmos.

⁴⁴ Pelikan (1993), 103.

⁴⁵ Pelikan (1993), 153.

⁴⁶ Pelikan (1993), 104.

toward God the Creator and the danger of erroneously interpreting the heavenly bodies were discussed by Clement of Alexandria:

Therefore some are deceived, I know not how, and worship the divine creation, the sun and the moon and the rest of the starry host, irrationally assuming that these, the instruments of time, are gods. For by his word were they established and by the breath of his mouth is all their power. . . . And let not any of you worship the sun, but let him desire the Maker of the sun; nor let him deify the cosmos, but let him seek the Creator of the cosmos. For it seems that the only refuge left for him who is to reach the gates of salvation is divine wisdom.⁴⁷

Such a depiction of the sun by the artist allows Johannes to exercise freedom in his description of the paramount role of the sun in the universe, as a source of light for the other heavenly bodies.⁴⁸

Another important figure whose depiction attests to an intentional divergence from the typical formula is that of Aion personifying Eternity. Aion is usually portrayed in front of the zodiac wheel or turning it with one of his hands. This change in the motif can be explained primarily by the ardent opposition of the Church Fathers to astrology, which resulted in the complete absence of the zodiac signs from Christian art in the early Byzantine period. However, it is also possible to explain this phenomenon by the desire to avoid the pagan misunderstanding of replacing Aion with the cosmic god who creates and guides all things.

The *tabula mundi* in the bathhouse in Gaza also differs from the other known depictions in Roman art by the appearance of seven winged angels, six attached to personifications (Okeanos, I, 307; Ge, II, 13; Thalassa, II, 78; Cheimon, II, 133; Bronte, II, 163; Sterope, II, 168) and the seventh supporting the globe (II, 45).

Downey claims that the angels are distributed at random and have no organic part in the composition.⁴⁹ He finds no reason for their association, neither with major forces of nature (Ge, Okeanos, Thalassa, and Cheimon) nor with minor elements such as Sterope and Bronte.

⁴⁷ Casey (1993), 100–101.

⁴⁸ We should note here the similarity between Johannes's description of the naked child on the disc and the appearance of Ixion in Greek and Roman art. In an especially creative portrayal on vase paintings from the fourth century BCE, Ixion is depicted as being carried by the three gods of vengeance (Erinyes), one of whom is seen beneath a wheel with hands stretched upward and the other two gods next to Ixion, turning him around. We should not ignore the fact that this example is from a very early date and that there is indeed a resemblance, although not absolute, to Roman depictions.

⁴⁹ Downey (1938), 211 (n. 27).

Moreover, he is astonished by the numerical disproportion (seven versus fifty pagan personifications) and cannot explain it. He therefore suggests that they were not angels, but winged pagan personifications, and that the cross was a decorative motif to which Johannes sought to give Christian significance.

However, the representation of the angels in the depiction from Gaza is in full harmony with the Christian and Jewish apocalyptic doctrines.⁵⁰ Origen is probably the most relevant text for the depiction of the angels in the work of art under discussion:

How long will the earth mourn and the grass of every field wither because of the wickedness of its inhabitants" [Jeremiah 12:4]. The prophet here speaks as if the earth was alive when he says the earth mourned because of the wickedness of those who walked upon it... For it is not the body earth that grieves "because of the wickedness of its inhabitants," but understand that for the administration of the universe an angel is assigned for the earth, and another for the waters, and another for air, and a fourth for fire. Thus rise up by reason to all the order that is in animals, in plants, and in the heavenly stars. An angel is assigned to the sun, and another to the moon, and another to the stars. These angels, whom we accompany as long as we are on the earth, either rejoice or grieve with us when we sin.⁵¹

⁵⁰ The link between angels and stars appears especially in the Enoch literature; the angels are said to be as numerous as the stars, frequently regulating their course and hence the seasons of the year. In 3 Enoch, an angel is in charge of each of the seven heavens; Scott (1991), 91–92. The idea that the celestial bodies move by the angels is also noted by Constantine of Antioch; Wolska-Conus (1968–73), IX, 13. As indicated by Mitchell (2002), 86, 102–103, angels also appear in the pagan cult of Theos Hypsistos in Asia Minor. Nevertheless, there were protests against the depictions of angels among the Monophysites, and doubts also arose among the orthodox. Philoxenos of Mabbug (a Monophysite) objected to the depiction of Christ, but also to the representation of angels in anthropomorphic form and to the rendering of the Holy Ghost in the shape of a dove; Kitzynger (1954), 131. The defensive tone of an epigram on a picture of an archangel by Agathias (d. 582 CE) and in a closely related epigram by Nilus Scholasticus, perhaps should be explained by the fact that the representation of angels had long been a target of opponents of Christian images; Kitzynger (1954), 139. John, bishop of Salonica, in an answer to pagan criticism of angels pictured on the icons as human beings says that the angels were not completely incorporeal; they are of air or of fire and their bodies are very fine. Angels are localized; they have appeared in bodily form to those whose eyes God opened and are therefore rightly so painted as spiritual created beings and ministers of God; Baynes (1951), 96.

⁵¹ In Jer., Hom. 10.6 (3.76.8–26 K1). Origen's idea that angels are in every part of the cosmos is also repeated in Ezech. Hom. 1.7 (8, 331.30 B); Scott (1991), 135. On Clement of Alexandria's approach that the stars are spiritual bodies in communion with and governed by appointed angels, Scott (1991), 108.

The appearance of angels in association with the three personifications that Downey defines as ancillary reminds us that in Greek mythology, Zeus's reign over the heavens is expressed by his power over thunder, lightning, and the elements. The appearance of angels specifically in connection with these features is not coincidental. Nor is the number of angels. Seven angels appear in Origen's homily that I quoted above. Their number is meant to remind the viewer of the seven churches in Revelation 1:20; however it could relate to the planets or to the number representing completion and perfection.⁵²

Another significant group we should consider for achieving a better understanding of the painting from Gaza is described in the closing section of the ekphrasis: Cosmos stepping on Physis and crowned by Aither. Plato's *Timaeus* is again instrumental for helping us appreciate the meaning of this group: we are told (30c–31a) that the visible world was made in the likeness of the eternal original. The created world is an imitation; it is similar but not identical to the realm of Form. The physical world is neither everlasting nor constant, as is the ideal and constant model, whose perfection in the visible universe is the reproduction of its own structure inasmuch as the conditions of temporal existence permit.⁵³

This view was further developed by Neoplatonists, who were concerned with showing that the infinitely divided material world was derived from a single undivided, intelligible first principle.⁵⁴ However, in the painting from Gaza, the traditional gods—those in the Neoplatonic system that represent agents or, rather, stages in the chain of emanation from the primeval One to the endless variety of the physical world—were omitted.⁵⁵ We may thus deduce that the *tabula mundi* from Gaza combines the Christian attitude with Neoplatonic philosophy. Similar ideas appear in the treatises of Pseudo-Dionysius, such as *The Celestial Hierarchy*, where he discusses the images of the angelic powers:

⁵² Saturnius and Menander say the world was created by seven angels; Scott (1991), 99.

⁵³ Cornford (1952), 39–41.

⁵⁴ Reydam-Schils (1999), 42–59, 89–99, 145–156, 245–250. The Iamblichan doctrine assumes three descending hypostases: the noetic (intelligible), the noeric (intellectual), and the visible *Kosmoi*; Liebeschuetz (2002), 190.

⁵⁵ In the oracle from Oennoanda in northern Lycia, relating the cult of Theos Hypsistos (the Highest God)—the essence of the divinity—was beyond reach in the upper air of heaven, the Aether; Mitchell (2002), 86, 92, 102–103.

So now, if you will, the eye of our intelligence is going to relax the effort by which it tries to reach the solitary heights of contemplation befitting the angels. We must come down to the plains of distinction and multiplicity, to the many variegated forms and shapes adopted by the angels. Then, once more, we will take off from these images, and will, by retracing, rise up again to the simplicity of the heavenly minds.⁵⁶

The Christian interpretation of the Platonic model is what distinguishes the visible from the invisible, the material from the spiritual, and leads to the recognition of one God: To ascend to God, one must go beyond that which is merely visible.⁵⁷

In order to better understand the cosmic depiction in the bathhouse in Gaza, we should consider the presentation of the personifications of the forces of nature in other buildings from that period. From the days of Justinian onward, the repertoire of motifs decorating mosaic floors in Palaestina and Arabia expanded and included personifications of the earth, the four seasons and the months of the year, the four rivers of Paradise, Thalassa or Abyss, Oceanus, and even Sophia.⁵⁸ It should be noted that Selena and Helios appear only once in a nonchurch context, but in what was probably the refectory or court of the Monastery of Lady Mary in Beth Shean. Their figures, portrayed in the form of busts without a chariot, are encircled by a depiction of the twelve labors of the months.⁵⁹

The material and earthly world was perceived as being suitable for the decoration of mosaic floors in Christian religious buildings from the end of the fourth century, but was limited to the depiction of animals, objects, floral motifs, and human figures engaged in daily life.

The absence of personifications, common in Classical art and up until the thirties of the sixth century, is notable and can be attributed to a number of factors. In the early days of the establishment of Christianity as the state religion, it was dangerous, in religious contexts, to be tolerant of what could be interpreted as idolatry. Before the waning of paganism, there was no place in a church for figures such as Ge, Thalassa, or Oceanus, but figures derived from Greek mythology had not vanished completely. They continued to exist in private and public secular art

⁵⁶ 328a; English translation by Luibheid (1985).

⁵⁷ Origen, In Jo. 13.23, 139; Scott (1991), 133; also see: Blumenthal and Markus, eds. (1981); Lyons (1982), 91–97; Ladner (1953), 1–34.

⁵⁸ Piccirillo (1993), xxiii–xxv; Waliszewski (2001), 244–297.

⁵⁹ Fitzgerald (1939), 7.

and, to a great extent, not only remained accessible but, like many elements in the Classical world, were considered to be of significant cultural value. Jewish art, on the other hand, adopted a totally different approach. As early as the second half of the fourth century we see in synagogues the adoption of the very prominent symbols derived from late Roman art for its purposes; for example, the figure of Helios as Sol Invictus, the signs of the zodiac, and depictions of the seasons (Fig. 9).⁶⁰ The different attitudes of Jewish and Christian patrons and artists to pagan images in the fourth and fifth centuries were possibly owed to a privilege reserved for the minority culture, which could appropriate symbols from the earlier hegemony, whereas Christianity was obliged to reject them in order to redefine itself.

It should be recalled that it was during this period that Emperor Justinian closed the academy in Athens. The cessation of creative pagan thought probably engendered tolerance and the introduction of Classical personifications and style into church art. Moreover, the notable extension of personifications in a cosmic depiction to a secular context—as on the dome (or wall) of the bathhouse in Gaza—as compared to the more finite use of them on church floors. The appearance of very few personifications of natural elements in church mosaics within inhabited scrolls or geometric nets beside human figures engaged in rustic activities strips those personifications of any divine connotation. Their incorporation into mosaic floors was intended to give the perception of the church as both a cosmic temple and a communal institution. The mosaics are pictures of the land that are both human-ethnographic and geophysical.

In conclusion, if the interpretation I suggest here is correct, that is, that the work of art in the bathhouse in Gaza presents the idea that the world is an imitation of the ideal model, we can then infer that the painting itself is an imitation of the imitation. Should we understand that the painting is inferior to the physical world? On the contrary, it seems that Johannes, agreeing with Plotinus, thought that the artist improves upon nature and that art is not a simple imitation, but brings the object one step nearer to the beauty of the forming principle from which nature itself derives.⁶¹ This is clearly stated in the introduction of

⁶⁰ Hachlili (1977), 61–77; (2002), 219–258.

⁶¹ On Plotinus' approach see the discussion of Meyer (2003), 40–46.

the ekphrasis when Johannes shares his spiritual ascent toward Aither and the revelation of the cross with his audience, and is repeated in the final section in his intellectual explanation of the meaning of the group that includes Cosmos, Physis, and Aither.

The ekphrasis corresponds to the narrative of the painting but also endows it with significance that undoubtedly could not be understood without its author's intervention. This is particularly evident in the way in which Johannes associates the cross with the myth of the *dēmiourgos* in Plato's *Timaeus*. This is the orator's addition, which is well anchored in the spirit of the work of art itself, as the Physis, Aither, and Cosmos group demonstrates. Johannes of Gaza's ekphrasis allows us to learn about the adaptation of philosophical concepts originating in Platonism into Christian theological writings as well as into the art created by its inspiration.⁶² Johannes tries to reconcile the Classical heritage with Christianity. Furthermore, he not only furnishes us with a rare example of secular art bearing religious significance, but also opens up a window onto its understanding and acceptance by the intellectuals of his day.

Almost at the same time the dome (or wall) in Gaza was decorated with the picture of the world by an anonymous artist, Constantine of Antioch was writing and illustrating his *Christian Topography*.⁶³ However, while Constantine's is a cosmography based on the biblical narrative and perhaps, as suggested by Elisheva Revel-Neher,⁶⁴ used a Jewish illustrated model, the one in Gaza is rooted in the Classical heritage. The coexistence of these two cosmographies is indicative of the complex situation of educated Christians in late antiquity, having to define themselves against the backgrounds of the two cultures they inherited—the Jewish and the pagan. In both, the cosmos is based on an ideal model that enables one to combine profane empiricism with a theological system.⁶⁵

⁶² The influence of Neoplatonism is also predominant in Johannes' sixth anacreonic poem; Ciccolella 2006, 91–95.

⁶³ Wolska-Conus (1968–73); (1990), 155–91.

⁶⁴ Revel-Neher (1990–91), 78–97.

⁶⁵ Wolska (1962), 45.

*Appendix**A Short Account of part I, line 180 to part II, line 313*

Johannes describes Hesperus (part I, lines 180–186), the Evening Star, as a boy falling from heaven, pointing the torch he is carrying downward. This is followed by what appears to be a scientific representation of a section of an astronomical map that includes the seven stars of the wagon as well as those of the heavenly bear and the seven planets (part I, lines 187–204). Johannes reveals to his listeners that he had used an old book of wisdom to understand this scene. One of the planets is Selene, the moon goddess, who shines by borrowed light that she receives from the sun (part I, lines 205–224). She drives a chariot drawn by a pair of oxen and holds the “feminine” disc of the moon in her hand, while her mantle is spread like a nimbus over her head.

At that point, Johannes draws attention to the four wind gods riding on horses with winged legs and heads (part I, lines 225–271), trying to evoke the liveliness and accuracy of the horses’ movement. His description goes on to describe the figure of Oceanus, with lobster claws on his head (κερασφόρος), rising from the sea (part I, lines 272–302). Oceanus, resting on a sea bull, holding an oar and his ram, watches the rising sun with great admiration, showing his reaction by putting a finger to his lips. Across from the sea bull, a sea monster (Ketos) emerges from the water.

In the next passage (part I, lines 303–314), Johannes designates the figures of Bythos (βυθός) (the depth of the sea) and the angel. Both of them rise from the sea near the Oceanus group and watch the sun with delight. The winged angel holds a rod with a cross on top—“the symbol of the son of heaven.”

Eos, the personified goddess of the dawn, arises from the water. She is winged, standing on her chariot, and holding a whip. Her chariot is drawn by the six Horai of the matins, whose colors change with the degree of their exposure to the sun. The six remaining Horai of the day, those signifying the afternoon, stand on the chariot behind her. Another Hora stands on the road wearing a dark robe, “hurrying to take her place as the seventh.”

The description of running time ends the first part of the ekphrasis. The second half begins in the afternoon with a description of Ge and the twin Karpoi (part II, lines 1–44), which opens with a charming account of the birth of the Karpoi (lines 7–17) even though—as in the

case of the birth of the sun—it is not actually shown. Friedländer and Krahmer agree that Ge was shown reclining, holding a cornucopia entwined in a snake's coils. She is embraced and kissed by one of the Karpoi while the other Karpos stands near her with an outstretched hand to collect the raindrops. An angel, to whom Johannes assigns the role of midwife, stands nearby.

The ekphrasis moves on to describe another winged angel with a snake encircling his neck and supporting the globe (part II, lines 45–54). The exact meaning and interpretation of the next passage (part II, lines 55–64) is disputed; the controversy focuses on the understanding of lines 55–57. Krahmer⁶⁶ and Levi⁶⁷ suggest the following translation: “And I saw Aroua, seeking the Dew (ἐέρσην), represented in a double form, and I believe that they (the two Ἑρσαί) have divided between them the earth, the one having taken Europe and the other Asia.” Downey maintains that the words εἶδος δισσοῦν (a double form) must refer to χθονὸς ἀρούρα (the soil of earth) and therefore suggests reading: “And I saw, seeking the dew, the soil of the earth, represented in a double form, which I believe to be Europe and Asia, who divide the earth between them.”⁶⁸ His reading was inspired by the similarity he found between the description of this scene and a floor mosaic found in 1933 in Bath E at Antioch (Fig. 5). The mosaic contains a depiction of Aroua kneeling and Ge half reclining on a seat in the shape of a female sphinx, eight Karpoi dragging a heavy garland of wheat stalks, and the seated figure of Aegyptus. Downey claims that the mosaic is a copy of a scene from a larger composition that was either identical with or the forerunner of the monument described by Johannes. But, as Levi pointed out, the mosaic and the scene described by Johannes differ in many respects.⁶⁹ The important contribution offered by the Antioch mosaic for an understanding of the ekphrasis is that it hints at Levi's suggestion that the depiction from Gaza included both Ge and Aroua. My view concerning the identity of the two remaining figures

⁶⁶ Krahmer (1920), 33–34.

⁶⁷ Levi (1947), 268.

⁶⁸ Downey (1938), 209.

⁶⁹ Levi (1944), 268–269.

in Gaza agrees with that of Krahmer and Levi, who interpret them as the two Ἐρσάι.⁷⁰

The next figure to appear in the poem is Thalassa, who is described as rising from the water (part II, lines 65–108). She has claws on her head, her eyes stare at the sun, her naked body is white, and her long blond hair falls into the water; her left elbow holds an oar and she puts her finger to her lips; her right arm is outstretched toward the rising sun. Near her swims an angel who watches over her. Thalassa is depicted against the background of the sea swarming with fish and other sea creatures, which Johannes portrays with liveliness and precision.

Cheimon, winter, or the wintry quarter of the heavens, rises upward like a storm (part II, lines 109–136). He is portrayed as a winged human male carrying a jug of water on his shoulder while rain rolls down his body. The two main streams that issue from him take the form of two young boys labeled Ὀμβροί (rainstorms or heavy rains). This description is followed by an account of lightning and a thunderstorm (part II, lines 137–169). At the beginning of this passage, Johannes takes a scientific approach, explaining that we first see the lightning and only hear the thunder afterward because of the difference between the speed of light and the speed of sound. He then mentions two personifications—Βροντή (thunder) and Ἀστραπή (lightning)—each accompanied by an angel; the one with Thunder tries to slow her down; the other shows Lightning the way.

Here begins the portrayal of Iris, goddess of the rainbow (part II, lines 170–202). She opens the wide belt of her dress and spreads it to form a multicolored arch. Johannes explains how dependent she is on the sun, from which she receives her colorful light; as a part of his elucidation, he includes an account of the sun's daily journey in his chariot from east to west across the sky. One should note the enormous difference in the way Friedländer and Krahmer illustrate Iris. Friedländer lends much weight to the description of the sun's daily travel and so reconstructs her belt (or rainbow) as an arch bridging the sky and the earth, whereas

⁷⁰ One should note the difference between Krahmer's and Levi's reconstructions. Despite the similar reading of the passage, Krahmer omits the figure of Aroura from his reconstruction. Friedländer (1912), 196, also casts doubt on the identity of the figures of "Europe" and "Asia," suggesting that they probably lacked labels. Note also the differences in the attributes and gestures of these figures in Friedländer's and Krahmer's reconstruction.

Krahmer prefers to illustrate this figure in the conventional formula of Roman art, spreading her mantle as a canopy over her head.

Phosphoros (Φωσφόρος)—the morning star—has a white star on his head and is illustrated holding a torch directed toward the sun (part II, lines 203–207). Among the allegories of the sun is the phoenix (part II, lines 208–226). Johannes first narrates the life cycle of the ancient bird and then explains its symbolic meaning:

This is a symbol of the cycle of the sun, because self-produced Time generates the passing years, and eternal (αἰών), having aged, returns to be young. It is generated by Helios in ever-changing appearances, always marching with him.⁷¹

At that point, Johannes mentions two cheerful traveling women—daughters of Demeter, goddess of fertility—labeled by the artist as *Euphoriai* (Εύφορίαι) (part II, lines 227–238).

Two lines are devoted to the description of Orthros (Ὀρθρος)—day-break (part II, lines 239–240), which is followed by a short description of Anatole (Ἀνατολή), the personification of sunrise (or the quarter of sunrise, i.e., the East), wearing a white dress and holding a torch (part II, lines 241–244). Nyx, the personification of night, is described in the next paragraph (part II, lines 245–252) as wearing a dark-colored *chiton* and a black scarf, escaping with fear from daylight.

A long section in the ekphrasis depicts the Horai (Ὠραι), the four seasons of the year (part II, lines 253–313). Johannes remarks that the periodicity of Nature corresponds to the cosmic cycle of the sun. The description of the attributes of each begins with spring.

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⁷¹ English translation by Levi (1944), 353.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Paul Friedländer's reconstruction of the lost painting from Gaza.
- Fig. 2. Gerhard Krahmer's reconstruction of the lost painting from Gaza.
- Fig. 3. Cupane's revision of Krahmer's suggested reconstruction.
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- Fig. 5. A floor mosaic in Bath E at Antioch containing a depiction of Aroua, eight *Karpoi*, and the figure of *Aegyptus* (after D. Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, Princeton, 1947).
- Fig. 6. The group of Cosmos, Physis, and Aither in the lost painting from Gaza.
- Fig. 7. The cosmological mosaic from Shahba-Philippopolis [after M. Immerzeel, "A Matter of Life or Death. The Mosaic from Shahba (Philippopolis) in the National Museum in Damascus," *Essays on Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East* 2 (Leiden: 1999), 63–71].
- Fig. 8. The figure of the rising Sun (*Oriens*) in the cosmological mosaic in the House of the Mithraeum in Emerita (Mérida), Spain.
- Fig. 9. Helios as Sol Invictus, the signs of the zodiac, and the seasons in the synagogue at Hammath-Tiberias.

PART THREE

CULTURAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN JEWS AND CHRISTIANS

COSMOLOGY, ART, AND LITURGY

Shulamith Laderman

Postbiblical apocryphal literature,¹ the writings of Philo and Josephus,² *Hekhalot* and *Merkavah* literatures,³ and rabbinical midrashic tradition⁴ all attribute cosmic and theological significance to the Tabernacle and the Temple. Their exegesis associates the building of the Tabernacle (*Ma'aseh Ha-Mishkan*) with the enigma of the Creation (*Ma'aseh Bereshit*) on the basis of textual parallelism between the description of the Creation in Genesis and the instructions for building the Tabernacle in Exodus.

The same cosmic and theological significance is reflected in an illuminated Byzantine manuscript known as the *Christian Topography*,⁵ originally written and illustrated in the sixth century⁶ (extant copies date from the ninth and eleventh centuries),⁷ which demonstrates a clear textual relationship to the early and later Jewish sources.

Wolska-Conus⁸ published an extensive critical edition of this illuminated Byzantine-Christian work and established its ideological and theological background. The treatise was originally thought to have been composed by Cosmas Indicopleustes, but Wolska-Conus identified

¹ Harrington (1985), II, 297–377; Klijn (1985), I, 615–652; Kee (1985), I, 788–795; Isaac (1985), I, 5–89; Gruenwald (1980), 47–48.

² Philo, *De vita Mosis* II.31–135; Colson and Whitaker, (1962), 484–514; Philo, *De specialibus legibus*, I.66–97; Colson and Whitaker, (1962), 136–154; Philo, *Quaestiones in Exodum*, II.51–124; Marcus (1953), 97–176; Josephus, *Antiquitates*, III.102–187; Thackeray (1930), 364–406.

³ Scholem (1965); Eilior (1997), 217–267, see 222.

⁴ Exodus, Rabbah 33.1–40.4, 48.1–52.5; Lehrman, Freedman and Simon (1939), 414–466, 546–581.

⁵ McCrindle (1897); Winstedt (1909); Wolska-Conus (1968–1973), 3 vols.

⁶ McCrindle (ibid., introduction X) states that in Book 2, the author writes that he visited in Adule at the time that the king went to war with the Homerites in Arabia. This battle took place in the year 522, during the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian (518–527). Wolska-Conus (ibid., vol. I, 16) dates the writing of the books of the *Christian Topography* to 547.

⁷ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699 of the ninth century, Sinai, Saint Catherine Monastery, cod. gr. 1186; and Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, cod. Plut. IX 28 of the eleventh century.

⁸ Wolska-Conus (1968–73); Wolska (1962).

Constantine of Antioch as the author.⁹ The work entitled *A Christian Topography for the Whole Universe* consists of ten books preceded by a prologue and a table of contents. The author was obviously well versed in the scholarship, theology, and scientific thought of his time, and the composition, clearly written in response to the scientific theories of the period, has two main themes:

- The cosmographic theme describes the building of the Tabernacle as a copy of the universe: “He then afterwards directed him [Moses] to construct the Tabernacle according to the pattern which he had seen in the mountain—being a pattern, so to say, of the whole world. He therefore made the Tabernacle, designing that as far as possible it should be a copy of the figure of the world.”¹⁰
- The prophetic theme associates the division of the Tabernacle into two parts with the division of the universe into two spaces and two conditions or states: “He made only two heavens, the first along with the earth, while placing the second in the middle and preparing two states—the present and the future—just as in the Tabernacle he had ordered two places to be formed in imitation of the world, for he says: ‘According to the pattern shown to thee in the mount’ (Ex. 25:40).”¹¹

Both themes constitute a cosmological theory based on a comparison of the biblical accounts of Creation and the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and both evidence Constantine of Antioch’s dependence on the Bible as the foundation of all knowledge. His method of interpreting biblical verses treats the words of the Bible as the absolute “Divine Truth” and as the basis for all of his theories.

Wolska-Conus¹² and Holder¹³ believe that Constantine of Antioch was influenced by several of the early Christian thinkers who wrote about the significance of the Mosaic Tabernacle. Both refer to Cosmas Indicopleustes as an early Christian author who, along with many important church thinkers in the East, including Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Methodius, Ephrem Syrus, Gregory of Nyssa, Theodore

⁹ Wolska-Conus (1989), 28–30; Kessler (1995), 365–375; see 365, n. 1.

¹⁰ McCrindle (1897), 110.

¹¹ Ibid., 113.

¹² Wolska (1962), 116–118.

¹³ Holder (1993), 101–106, 102.

of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria, Theodoret of Cyrus, and Procopius of Gaza, offered an intriguing exegesis of the Tabernacle. However, in studying Constantine's particular exegetical method, it becomes clear that he is drawing on early Jewish sources, and this is especially evident in his attitude toward the divine pattern that links the creation of the universe with the building of the Tabernacle.

The present study delineates a possible route by which these Jewish sources found their way into the *Christian Topography* through research on an early Christian liturgical collection known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*, widely believed to have been compiled in Antioch in the fourth century.¹⁴

The scholars Kohler,¹⁵ Bousset,¹⁶ Goodenough,¹⁷ and Fiensy¹⁸ all find references to Jewish sources in the *Apostolic Constitutions*' prayers in Books VII and VIII. According to their interpretation, these paragraphs are based on the Greek translation of the Sabbath *Amidah* prayer, which was adapted and integrated into the *Apostolic Constitutions* with Christian interpolations.¹⁹ Simon²⁰ argues that these liturgical prayers were preserved in the Syrian church precisely because of these additions. The idea that early Christian liturgy was influenced by Jewish liturgy was also expressed by such scholars as Heinemann,²¹ Wellesz,²² Beckwith,²³ and Taft.²⁴ Schirmann²⁵ suggested that this influence was attributable to the Jews who joined the early church, becoming Jewish-Christians and bringing their liturgy with them.

This is a highly probable theory, as Antioch—where both the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Christian Topography* were composed—was a largely bilingual city with a significant Jewish population, which would have made it a fruitful locale for the continuing influence of Judaism

¹⁴ Van der Horst (1999), 19.

¹⁵ Kohler (1924), 387–425.

¹⁶ Bousset (1915), 435–485.

¹⁷ Goodenough (1969), 306–358.

¹⁸ Fiensy (1985), 5–9.

¹⁹ Ibid., 193–197.

²⁰ Simon (1996), 53–57.

²¹ Heinemann (1964), 93, 151.

²² Wellesz (1949), 35–39.

²³ Beckwith (1978), 39–50.

²⁴ Taft (1986), 3–13.

²⁵ Schirmann (1953–54), 123–161.

on Christianity.²⁶ Meeks and Wilken²⁷ observed that the sermons of John Chrysostom in the fourth century show that there was widespread Christian involvement with Judaism. Chrysostom attacks the Christians who attend synagogues, exposing themselves to Jewish prayers and integrating these prayers into their own worship.²⁸

The Structure of the Universe

Examining the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Book VII, Chapters 33–37, and Book VIII, Chapter 12, we find its further influence on Constantine's method. The verses quoted in both the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Christian Topography* to describe the structure of the universe are taken from the books of Psalms, Isaiah, and Job rather than from the account of the Creation in Genesis, giving them a homiletic application to articulate and illustrate a specific physical shape of the cosmos. Both texts refer to the heavens as a curtain creating a tentlike structure above the earth and above the firmament, as in Isaiah 40:22,²⁹ "...who stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in," and in Psalms 104:2, "Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who hast stretched out the heavens like a tent." Both describe the earth as suspended over nothingness and surrounded by oceans, as in Job 26:7, "He stretcheth out the north over the void, and hangs the earth upon nothing." In both, the dust of the earth is gathered into a square box, as in Job 38:38, "When the dust runneth into a mass and the clods cleave fast together?" which relies on the Septuagint translation used by Constantine of Antioch: "He has inclined heaven to earth and it has been poured out as the dust of the earth I have welded it as a square block of stone."³⁰ The use of the same verses suggests a common homiletic understanding of the biblical text as well as a shared conception of the structure of the universe (see Table 1).

²⁶ Fiensy (1985), 217.

²⁷ Meeks and Wilken (1978), 31.

²⁸ Wilken (1983), 75.

²⁹ The following quotations are from *The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version* (Cleveland: 1964).

³⁰ McCrindle (1897), 30 n. 1.

Table 1

<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i> VII, 34, 1,2 ³¹	<i>Christian Topography</i> : McCrindle, p. 130
[...] who caused the earth to settle and stretched out heaven³² and precisely arranged the disposition of each of the creatures. By your resolution, O Master, the world has beamed (with joy) and heaven as a vault³³ has been fixed and adorned with the stars for consolation in darkness.	This is the first heaven, shaped like a vaulted chamber, which was created on the first day along with the earth, and of it Isaiah speaks thus: "<i>He that hath established the heaven as a vaulted chamber.</i>"³⁴ But the heaven, which is bound to the first at the middle, is that which was created on the second day, to which Isaiah refers when he says: "<i>And having stretched it out as a tent to dwell in.</i>"³⁵ David also says concerning it: "<i>Stretching out the heaven as a curtain.</i>"³⁶ and indicating it still more clearly he says: "<i>Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters.</i>"³⁷ Now when Scripture speaks of the extremities of heaven and earth, this cannot be understood as applicable to a sphere. Isaiah again says: "<i>Thus saith the Lord, he that made the heaven and pitched it.</i>"³⁸
<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i> VII, 35, 5³⁹ Heaven knows the one who vaulted it upon nothing as a stony cube⁴⁰ and who united earth and water with themselves...	[...] Nay more, the extremities of the heaven are bound together with the extremities of the earth, and on both sides, and concerning this it is written in Job: "<i>And he inclined heaven to earth, and the earth is poured out as dust, and I have fastened it as a square block to a stone.</i>"⁴¹

³¹ McCrindle (1897), 30 n. 1.

³² Fiensy (1985), 61.

³³ Ibid., n. 3, Ps. 104:2.

³⁴ McCrindle (1897), 130.

³⁵ Ibid., n. 4, Isa. 40:22.

³⁶ Ibid., n. 5, Ps. 104:2.

³⁷ Ibid., n. 4, Ps. 104:3.

³⁸ Is. 42:5.

³⁹ Fiensy (1985), 69; Goodenough (1969), 307.

⁴⁰ Goodenough (1969), 307, n. 12, Job 38:38.

⁴¹ McCrindle (1897), 130 n. 8, Job 38:38.

Table 1 (cont.)

<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i> VII, 34, 1,2	<i>Christian Topography</i> : McCrindle, p. 130
	And with regard to the earth it is again written in Job: " <i>He that hangeth the earth upon nothing</i> " ⁴² meaning, that it had nothing underneath it. And David in harmony with this, when he could discover nothing on which it was founded, says: " <i>He that hath founded the earth upon its own stability</i> ," ⁴³ as if he said it hath been founded by thee upon itself and not upon anything else.
<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i> VIII, 12, 9,13 ⁴⁴	McCrindle, pp. 298–299
For you are the one who set up heaven like an arch ⁴⁵ and stretch it out like a curtain ⁴⁶ and established the earth upon nothing, ⁴⁷ by Thy will. 3. (You are the one) who set up the abyss and surrounded it with a great cavity when the sea was heaped up with salty water. But you circumscribed it with the gates of the lightest sand. ⁴⁸	[...] And again about its figure Isaiah says: " <i>He that hath established the heaven as a vaulted chamber and stretched it out as a tent to dwell in.</i> " ⁴⁹ The expression as a <i>vaulted chamber</i> has reference to the first heaven, which he speaks of as a house where people live and make their abode. And again David says: " <i>Stretching out the heaven as a curtain</i> " ⁵⁰ speaking here of the firmament—and speaking of it as a curtain, that is, as the coverings which made the roof over the Tabernacle are properly called leather

⁴² Ibid., n. 9, Job 26:7.⁴³ Ibid., 131, n. 1, Ps. 104:5.⁴⁴ Fiensy (1985), 101; Goodenough (1969), 321.⁴⁵ Ibid., Fiensy, n. 16; Goodenough, n. 1, Isa. 40:22.⁴⁶ Ibid., Fiensy, n. 17; Goodenough, n. 84, Ps. 104:2.⁴⁷ Ibid., Fiensy, n. 18; Goodenough, n. 85, Job 26:7.⁴⁸ 18 Ibid., Goodenough, n. 87, Job 38:38.⁴⁹ McCrindle (1897), 298 n. 6, Isa. 40:22.⁵⁰ Ibid., n. 7, Ps. 104:2.

Table 1 (cont.)

<i>Apostolic Constitutions</i> VII, 34, 1,2	<i>Christian Topography</i> : McCrindle, p. 130
(you are the one) who by the winds sometimes arches it as high as mountains, while at other times you spread it out like a plain.	curtains. He no doubt says: "<i>Who layeth the beams of his upper chambers in the waters</i>"⁵¹ Here more clearly speaking concerning the firmament itself as if it were a covering. But that there is nothing under the earth is thus declared in Job: "<i>He hangeth the earth upon nothing</i>,"⁵² meaning that there is nothing underneath it. In like manner again in Job: "<i>Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?</i>"⁵³ Meaning that there is nothing underneath on which it is fixed. And David says: "<i>He hath founded the earth upon its own stability</i>,"⁵⁴ as if he said that it has been founded upon itself and not upon anything. But with regard to the heaven being fastened to the earth he declares in Job: "<i>He hath inclined heaven to earth; dust is poured out as earth, but I have cemented it as if with stone a square block</i>,"⁵⁵ intimating that the heaven is inclined to the earth and at its lower part fastened to it like a cube, that is, at the four corners. The Tabernacle as a whole, is therefore a pattern of the whole world.

According to Constantine of Antioch's homiletical interpretation, the verses from Genesis, Psalms, Isaiah, and Job provide a concrete understanding of the schematic model representing the pattern of the world:⁵⁶

⁵¹ Ibid., n. 8, Ps. 104:3.

⁵² Ibid., n. 9, Job 26:7.

⁵³ Ibid., n. 10, Job: 38:6.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 299, n. 1, Ps. 104:5.

⁵⁵ Ibid., n. 3 Job 38:38.

⁵⁶ Ibid., Book IV, 129.

It is written: *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.*⁵⁷ We therefore first depict along with the earth, the heaven which is vaulted and which has its extremities bound together with the extremities of the earth. To the best of our ability we have endeavored to delineate it on its western side and its eastern: for these two sides are walls extending from below to the vault above. There is also the firmament which in the middle is bound together with the first heaven and which, on its upper side has the waters according to divine scripture itself. The position and figure are such as here sketched (Fig. 1).

The three extant copies of the illuminated *Christian Topography*, in the Vatican,⁵⁸ at Saint Catherine's,⁵⁹ and in Florence⁶⁰ all translate the above biblical accounts into visual terms. The verbal descriptions become a pictorial blueprint. For example, the miniature on fol. 65r of the Sinai copy (Fig. 2) shows the superiority of the arched heaven above the firmament and emphasizes its connection to the earth (on the west and east sides). It portrays the firmament as a line dividing the arched heavens from the elevated mountain of the earth, the water above from the water below.

Other miniatures, fol. 69r of Sin. gr. 1186 (Fig. 3) and fol. 43r of Vat. gr. 699 (Fig. 4), portray the essence of the biblical verses. They picture a schematic box topped by a semicircular cover to represent the heavens spread out above the firmament and the earth, and illustrate the following passage in the *Christian Topography*:⁶¹

To the extremities on the four sides of the earth the heaven is fastened at its own four extremities, making the figure of a cube, that is to say, a quadrangular figure, while up above it curves round in the form of an oblong vault and becomes as it were a vast canopy. And in the middle the firmament is made fast to it, and thus two places are formed.

From the earth to the firmament is the first place, this world, namely in which are the angels and men and all the present state of existence. From the firmament again to the vault above is the second place—the Kingdom of Heaven, into which Christ, first of all, entered, after his ascension, having prepared for us a new and living way.

⁵⁷ Gen. 1:1.

⁵⁸ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, second half ninth century. Wolska-Conus (1968–73); Stornajolo (1908); Kondakoff (1886–91); Rjedin (1916), I, 136ff; Lazarev (1967) 41, 137, n. 39, 172; Devreesse (1950), 176ff.

⁵⁹ Mount Sinai, Monastery of St Catherine, eleventh century; Weitzmann (1979), 58ff.

⁶⁰ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, late eleventh century; Weitzmann (1964), No. 366, 346ff.

⁶¹ McCrindle (1897), IV, 129–130.

On the western side and the eastern the outline presented is short, as in the case of an oblong vault, but on its north and south sides it shows its length. Its figure is therefore something such as this.

The schematic box-cube shown in Sin. gr. 1186 (see Fig. 3) and in Vat. gr. 699 (see Fig. 4) is drawn with a neat perspective to the right showing the outline of the western and the eastern sides, namely the flat drawing of the “short side” of the universe as described above and as shown in Fig. 1, together with the representation of the length of the cosmos on the north and the south aides and the oblong vault on top.

The created universe thus is portrayed in both words and pictures as a vaulted rectangle. The Tabernacle, the Temple, and the Ark were all depicted in the same way, since they were made “according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount” (Ex. 25:40).⁶² ‘Pattern’ is the key word in the cosmographic theme of the *Christian Topography*. The pattern of the Tabernacle reveals the pattern of the totality of God’s creation. The sanctuary and its vessels are symbolic representations of the Creation.

Elisheva-Elisabeth Revel-Neher traces this illustrative formula to a Jewish schematic model found originally on the tetradrachma coins issued by Bar-Kochba during the Second Revolt (132–135 CE) (Fig. 5).⁶³ The vaulted rectangular form in the center of the four pillars is a visual interpretation of the Ark of the Covenant, which is the frontal view of a box with a rounded top formed by the wings of the cherubim. The two dots in the front represent the ends of the poles that reached to the curtain (parochet) of the Holy of Holies.⁶⁴ It appears that in addition to using the idea of the Tabernacle being constructed on the pattern of the Creation, Constantine of Antioch might also have resorted to a formal prototype for the Tabernacle and the Ark borrowed from Jewish biblical illustrations—a prototype that often appears in Jewish art.⁶⁵

⁶² Ibid., 113.

⁶³ Revel-Neher (1984), 75–80.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 20–35.

⁶⁵ Revel-Neher (1990–91), 78–97, discusses the schema that often appears in Jewish art, as can be seen in the various pictures in the third-century Dura-Europos synagogue. The painted central panel above the ciborium in this synagogue depicts an architectural facade that shows a structure very similar to the image found on the Bar-Kochba coin. The panel of the dedication of the Tabernacle on the west wall of the synagogue shows the same basic rounded structure, this time standing within the representation of the Tabernacle. Another panel in the same register illustrates the story of the Ark in the Temple of Dagon (1 Sam. 5–6). With the same schematic model, the Ark is being returned miraculously to the people of Israel. The same schema representing the Ark

The Cosmic Image of the Ark of the Covenant

The schema described above as the “symbol of the universe” was used by Constantine as the formal representation of the Ark of the Covenant, as well as of the Tabernacle in the wilderness. In Book V:36 a long paragraph concludes with the words: “Here is the drawing of the Ark of Atonement.”⁶⁶ This sentence appears as a legend under a structure of a rectangular base supporting a rounded cover placed between two figures portraying Zacharias and Abia in the Sinai manuscript fol. 82r (Fig. 6). The two tetramorphic cherubim seen above the rounded gold cover of the Ark, “the propitiatory,” as is noted in the caption near it, serve to emphasize the cosmic meaning of the Ark of the Covenant. The text reads as follows: “Having then been commanded to make the Tabernacle he made it according to the pattern which had been shown to him, and also its appurtenances according to their pattern, the Ark of testimony and the Mercy-seat above and the two cherubim stretching out their wings, and overshadowing the Mercy-seat above.”⁶⁷

According to this passage the lower, rectangular, section of the Ark represents the earth and the part of the “Holy” in the Tabernacle, while the upper, vaulted, section represents both heaven and the most sacred area, the “Holy of Holies.” This is his understanding of biblical description in the quotation, “And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high, screening the Ark-cover with their wings” (Ex. 25:20).

The two tetramorphic figures above the rounded gold cover represent the cherubim, as indicated by the legend next to them, but the image does not correspond to the biblical description of the cherubim as biwinged creatures: “And he set the cherubim within the inner house; and the wings of the cherubim were stretched forth, so that the wing of the one touched the one wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house” (I Kings 6:27).

The cherubim seen in Vat. gr. 699 (Fig. 7 and in Sin. gr. 1186 (Fig. 6) all have four wings. As the cherubim described in the prayer in chapter VII:35 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* are also tetrawinged, it appears

of the Covenant is found in Jewish funerary art, as in a wall carving in Catacomb 4 in Beth Shearim and in a decorated lintel in the synagogue in Capharnaum, both from the third to the fourth century.

⁶⁶ McCrindle (1897), V, 153.

⁶⁷ Ibid., V, 146.

that in sketching them above the Ark of the Covenant Constantine created tetramorphic creatures with four wings and three heads based on the description in the liturgical paragraph of the *Apostolic Constitutions* rather than on the biblical description. The prayer begins with a hymn in praise of God and continues with the angels joining in the theophany of Creation, declaring that there is only one Holy entity. The prayer reads:

The heavens proclaim your power and earth being shaken is hung on nothing secure. The sea swells and feeds a myriad herd of animals and is bound by the beach. (The sea) stands in awe of your will and compels everything to cry out: "How magnified are your works O Lord; you made everything in wisdom, the earth is full of your creation" (Ps. 104:24). And the flaming army of angels and the intellectual spirits say to Phelmuni, "There is one holy one" (Dan. 8:13). And the holy seraphim together with six-winged cherubim singing the victory ode to you, cry out with never-ceasing voices, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord Sabaoth, Heaven and earth are full of your glory" (Isa. 6:3). And the other multitudes of the orders: angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities, powers, cry out and say, "Blessed is the glory of the Lord from his place." (Ezek. 3:12)

The line "The holy seraphim together with the six-winged cherubim singing the victory ode to you" is a paraphrase of Isaiah 6:3. The response of the heavenly hosts: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place" is a quotation from Ezekiel 3:12. Isaiah 6:2 is recited by the seraphim, "Above him stood the seraphim; each one had six wings," whereas in Ezekiel the blessing is recited by the holy creatures, who are described as four-winged cherubim with four faces.⁶⁸ Both Isaiah and Ezekiel are quoted in paragraph 35: "The holy seraphim together with the six-winged cherubim," creating a new conflation of cherubim and seraphim.

Kohler points out that, "Erroneously the six wings are ascribed to 'the cherubim' instead of the seraphim, as in Isaiah 6:2," meaning that the source of the erroneous reference to six-winged cherubim is the verse from Isaiah that precedes the statement "Holy, holy, holy..." In Isaiah 6:2 the seraphim are described as having six wings. According to Kohler, the author of the prayer made a double mistake. He used the

⁶⁸ Ezek. 10:20, 21, "This is the living creature that I saw under the God of Israel by the river Chebar; and I knew that they were the cherubim. Every one had four faces apiece and every one four wings and the likeness of the hands of a man was under their wings."

description of the seraphim to describe the cherubim and he joined the seraphim of Isaiah with the cherubim of Ezekiel.

One may thus conclude that the cosmic image of the Ark of the Covenant is manifested by several details that associate it with the theophany of Creation: the special schema that visualizes the “symbol of the universe” and its creation; the two haloed priests⁶⁹ pointing to the cover of the Ark, titled “the propitiatory,” where God made his will known, and whence he granted forgiveness;⁷⁰ and the two cherubim, the “holy creatures” who praise and sanctify the Lord, above the Mercy-seat (the *kaporet*). This particular image of the cherubim is indicative of Constantine’s wish to extend cosmic importance to the Ark of the Covenant by relying on the juxtaposition of Isaiah 6:3 and Ezekiel 3:12 as expressed in the liturgical passage in the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

The Eschatological Meaning of the Resurrection of the Dead

The similarity of verbal imagery in the *Apostolic Constitutions* and the *Christian Topography* is evident in another miniature in Vat. Gr. 699 fol. 89r (Fig. 8), which shows the *Parousia* (the Second Coming of Christ) described in Matthew 25:31–34:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, he will sit in state on his throne, with all the nations gathered before him. . . . Then the king will say to those on his right hand, “You have my Father’s blessings; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made.”

This full-page miniature is framed by the same schema that characterizes the “short side” of the universe (see Fig. 1) and the Ark of the Covenant (see Fig. 5).⁷¹ Within this enclosure the image of Jesus appears seated on a throne under the heavenly dome. A dark-blue oval shadow surrounding him suggests the opening in the upper heavens.

The rectangular space below the heavenly domain is divided into three registers. The lowest register shows a row of figures whose heads

⁶⁹ Revel-Neher (1990–91), 89–91, views the written legends above their heads as a late addition and learns from their appearance that they represent Moses (the younger figure) and Aaron (the first high priest). Both are shown with their specific garments on the two sides of the Ark as a proof of their calling.

⁷⁰ Kessler (1995), 366.

⁷¹ Ainalov (1961), 38–40.

seem to be coming up through the ground—the people being resurrected from the dead. Above them are the righteous, who are candidates for ascension to heaven, and above them are the angels. These figures are set against a white background, in contrast to the richly decorated dome behind the image of Jesus.

Representation of Jesus enthroned in the Kingdom of Heaven with those waiting to join him, their heads raised in prayer, is in keeping with the *Christian Topography* eschatological description of the *Parousia*: “He takes with Himself into the Kingdom of Heaven the faithful, the righteous, the worthy, both angels and men...,”⁷² or “Neither the angels nor men enter heaven. Only the Lord Christ, raised from the dead, has entered it as a precursor for us, as long as the present condition still lasts, giving to you the assurance that, just as he entered heaven, so too all of you will take your place in the ascending hierarchy under his rule.”⁷³

The eschatological idea of the resurrection of the dead also appears in *Apostolic Constitutions* VII:34 and VIII:12. Paragraph 8 of section 34 reads: “And you deprived wayward mankind of the reward of life, not removing it for all time but making (mankind) sleep for a little while; you called (them) into rebirth by an oath, you shattered the bonds of death, O Quickener of the dead through Jesus Christ our hope.”

Kohler and Fiensy⁷⁴ trace this prayer back to the Jewish benediction of *Gevuroth* (God’s might in Creation), which is the second blessing in the *Amidah* prayer.⁷⁵ Fiensy cites⁷⁶ the Babylonian version of the Hebrew text of the seven benedictions of the Sabbath *Amidah* prayer that was found in the Cairo genizah, showing the verbal parallels between these benedictions and the Greek text of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Every benediction, apart from thematic equivalents, has at least one verbal parallel. In section 34, as noted above, the expression “O Quickener of the dead” is a translation of the Hebrew expression *mehayyeh hametim*, which opens and closes the blessing of *Gevuroth*. Both prayers speak of God’s power and conclude with blessing God, who revives the dead:

⁷² McCrindle (1897), V, 237.

⁷³ Kessler (1995), 366, based on Wolska-Conus (1968–73), V, 247.

⁷⁴ Kohler (1924), 414–415; Fiensy (1985), 132, 176.

⁷⁵ *Amidah*—lit. “standing.” One of the two most important Jewish prayers, from the period of the Mishna (2nd century). It is recited three times a day while standing. During the week it consists of eighteen benedictions; on the Sabbath and most holidays there are seven benedictions.

⁷⁶ Fiensy (1985), 155–159.

You are mighty forever, O Lord, who quickens the dead (added only in winter: Who causes the wind to blow and sends down the rain), who sustains the living in kindness... Who quickens the dead in great compassion, who supports the falling... keeps faith with them that sleep in the earth... Who is like you, Lord of mighty acts, and who is similar to you, King, who kills and quickens and causes salvation to spring forth quickly. And you are faithful to quicken the dead. Blessed are you, O Lord, who quickens the dead.⁷⁷

The editor of the *Apostolic Constitutions* added a Christian interpolation to this prayer, inserting the phrase “through Jesus Christ” into the Jewish benediction of *Gevuroth*. The Christian version of the prayer addresses God in the second person: “Blessed are you, O Lord, King of the ages, who through Christ made the universe and through him in the beginning brought order to the [matter].”⁷⁸

In the *Parousia* miniature (see Fig. 8) Christ is shown following his resurrection seated in the upper heavens on his heavenly throne.⁷⁹ The people rising from their graves appear as if they are awakening from a short sleep (“sleep for a little while”) that was forced upon them because of sin, as in the prayer from the *Apostolic Constitutions*. They are now ready to ascend to heaven with the help of Jesus, who opened the way for them and is inviting them to join him.

In the miniature, the angels lift up their heads toward Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven. Constantine of Antioch identifies the angels in Isaiah 6:3 calling out “holy, holy, holy” (three times) as a reference to the Trinity that represents the one God “whose glory fills the earth.”⁸⁰

The hypothesis that prayers VII:33–38 of the *Apostolic Constitutions* influenced the *Christian Topography* points to an additional source from which Jewish ideas may have been introduced into Byzantine Christian works. The character and the method of exegesis used in the Greek translations of these prayers transmit biblical understandings

⁷⁷ Ibid., 155, 156.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 65, section 1.

⁷⁹ Kessler (1995), 365–366. In its general format, the Vatican image may have been influenced by a Last Judgment, but the miniature focuses only on the reception of the blessed into heaven at the instance of the Second Coming. The perfect symmetry of the praying figures reinforces this point, as does the duplication of the same inscription at the left and the right, in place of the traditional counterpart: “Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

⁸⁰ McCrindle (1897), V, 236.

associated with Philo and Hellenistic Judaism.⁸¹ The hypothesis that the *Apostolic Constitutions* were compiled in the Hellenistic environment of Antioch and the fact that Constantine of Antioch is thought to have been the author/illustrator of the *Christian Topography* reinforce this supposition.

As is known from literary sources, the languages spoken in the city of Antioch were Greek and Syriac, and the Jews (who lived there until they were expelled in the seventh century) had a strong influence on Christianity.⁸² At the beginning of the second century, Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, wrote a critique of the Jewish influence on the Christians,⁸³ and as noted earlier, in the fourth century, John Chrysostom attacked the Jews of Antioch and their synagogues because many Christians participated in Jewish worship on Sabbaths and holidays.⁸⁴

If the prayers of the *Apostolic Constitutions* were in fact compiled in Antioch and the author and illustrator of the *Christian Topography* was indeed Constantine of that city, it is reasonable to assume that Antioch was a place where Christians took prayers from the Jewish congregations and introduced them, with appropriate emendations and interpolations, into the Christian liturgy. It is also plausible to assume that this integration was undertaken by people who were familiar with the Jewish liturgy at a time of friendly relations between the two communities. They did not find it necessary to change the content of the prayers but only to insert Christian typological additions, such as “by means of Jesus” or “through the Messiah” into the Jewish prayers.⁸⁵

In view of all of the foregoing examples, we might well conclude that the liturgy of the *Apostolic Constitutions* should be considered one of the avenues by which Hellenistic Jewish material found its way to the author and illustrator of the *Christian Topography*.

⁸¹ Runia (1988), suggests that scholars of strongly varying opinions, both Jewish and Christian, adopted Philo's interpretations as completely consistent with their own views.

⁸² Levine (2000), 273–275.

⁸³ Fiensy (1985), 219, n. 43; Simon (1996), 267.

⁸⁴ Levine (2000), 273, n. 110, brings many sources to bear on this phenomenon.

⁸⁵ Fiensy (1985), 220–219.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 38 v.
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Fig. 8. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 89r.

THE CODEX BARBARUS SCALIGERI,
THE *CHRISTIAN TOPOGRAPHY*, AND THE QUESTION OF
JEWISH MODELS OF EARLY CHRISTIAN ART

Herbert L. Kessler

In her three important books, as in her other studies of Judaism and medieval manuscript illumination, Elisheva Revel-Neher has provided a broad and sturdy foundation for understanding the ways in which Jewish art may have provided a basis for the Christian tradition.¹ With exceptional intellectual delicacy, she has eschewed any simple explanation, proposing, instead, that the relationship between Jewish and Christian biblical art was both complex and interactive. She sums up this view at the end of *Le témoignage de l'absence*:

Ainsi, le peintre des manuscrits bibliques byzantins copie-t-il ses modèles juifs dont la silhouette s'affirme de plus en plus sur le fond de l'iconographie de Byzance. Formes et traditions formelles s'imbriquent, s'interchangent et se déplacent, dans l'ombre de ces modèles. Mais c'est la signification qui détermine l'impact de l'image, à Byzance comme dans le monde juif. Le message iconographique des objets du Sanctuaire parle le langage de la vérité théologique.²

With these words, Revel-Neher tackled the question all scholars face when dealing with the issue of Jewish sources for the Christian artistic tradition, even and especially as more evidence is unearthed in Israel. My contribution in honor of her retirement from the Hebrew University's Department of Art History is therefore but a footnote to her magnificent work—an effort to light a flickering candle in the Jewish *ombre* that seems to overshadow the illustrations of the enigmatic treatise known as the *Christian Topography* that is at the heart of much of Revel-Neher's own scholarship.

Commonly ascribed to Cosmas Indicopleustes, but recently attributed to Constantine of Antioch, the *Christian Topography* was, from

¹ Revel-Neher (1984), Revel-Neher (1992).

² Revel-Neher (1998), 123.

its inception in the mid-sixth century, intended to be illustrated;³ and the four surviving Middle Byzantine manuscripts certainly preserve many of the essential characteristics of the original pictorial system.⁴ As Revel-Neher has shown, the vestiges of the lost late antique model include specific Jewish elements in the Byzantine copies, including, most notably, the characteristic form of the Tabernacle that serves as the schematic basis of Constantine of Antioch's theological speculations. Revel-Neher demonstrated that the slightly trapezoidal "outer courtyard" capped by an arched "*Sancta Sanctorum*," representing the sacred structure underlying Constantine's treatise, owes much to Jewish representations of the *Aron ha-Kodesh* (Ark of the Covenant). Just as important, however, the diagram of the Tabernacle acquired its own distinct meaning in the new Christian context—in fact, a subversive one. The authoritative silhouette taken over from Jewish art provides a schema that, in an act of supersession, is literally "fleshed out" by Christian figures painted on top of it.⁵

In other miniatures, a putative reliance on Jewish sources is less easily understood. Why would the original illuminator of the *Christian Topography* have consulted a Jewish model for the Sacrifice of Isaac, for instance, a subject that by the sixth century was ubiquitous in the Christian world?⁶ Yet, the depiction in the manuscripts of the *Christian Topography* (e.g., Florence, Bibl. Med. Laur., Cod. Plut. IX. 28, fol. 132v; Fig. 1) includes all three distinctive digressions from the biblical text found in earlier and contemporary Jewish representations: the Hand symbolizing God's voice, the ram tethered to the bush, and Isaac bound with his hands tied behind his back.⁷ Inspired by the midrashic tradition, the last (as well as the Hand) appears in the sixth-century mosaic at

³ Cf. Wolsa-Conus (1968–73); Wolska-Conus (1990); Revel-Neher (1995). These views greatly complicate, though do not entirely subvert, the powerful claims made in Weitzmann (1971).

⁴ Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. gr. 699; Stornajolo (1908); Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery, Cod. gr. 1186; Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, MS. Plut. IX.28; Smyrna (Izmir), Evangelical School, B.8 (destroyed); Strzykowski (1899) and Bernabò (1998).

⁵ See my own elaboration of Revel-Neher's ideas in Kessler (1990/91), Kessler (1993), Kessler (1994).

⁶ Augustine chided Faustus for ignoring the fact that the sacrifice of Isaac "is repeated in so many tongues and portrayed in so many places;" *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, 22.73 (PL 42:446).

⁷ Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 87.

Beth Alpha (Fig. 2),⁸ and the tethered ram is an element of the recently unearthed fifth-century mosaic at Sepphoris.⁹ However, as alike to one another the iconographic details and even the overall compositions may be in these Jewish and Christian works, the characterization of the figures and, most obviously, the styles of the renderings differ considerably. As in similar instances, one must decide whether the similarities suggest a common source or, to the contrary, whether the differences point to independent origins.

A seventh/eighth-century Latin manuscript, the so-called Barbarus Scaligeri in Paris (BnF, MS lat. 4884), introduced into the discussion of the *Christian Topography* some time ago, deserves renewed attention in this connection.¹⁰ One text in this volume, the translation of a fifth-century Greek Alexandrian chronicle that was updated 476–518, reiterates biblical history in a very schematic fashion. Like the *Christian Topography* itself, this text was clearly intended to be illustrated; large spaces are left for scenes of Adam and Eve, Noah, and the Crossing of the Jordan, as well as others for maps and various mythological subjects. Moreover, labels in three of the reserved spaces not only indicate the specific subjects to be pictured in them, but also plot the actual placement of the figures. The first of these (fol. 15v; Fig. 3) leaves little doubt that at least some of the planned illustrations were based on preexisting depictions. The designated arrangement of the Sacrifice of Isaac conforms closely to that of the Beth Alpha mosaic, with the *altarium* at the right, Abraham and Isaac at the center (the boy clearly envisioned as kneeling on the ground), God’s “voice” at the top (its placement indicating that, as in the mosaic, Abraham was turning around in response to the words, “Do not raise your hand against the boy”), the offering, and the tree of Sabec. The Jewish mosaic includes two of the same labels, “Isaac” and “Abraham” (in Hebrew) and beneath the Hand representing God’s voice, it also indicates the Lord’s spoken order (in Aramaic). The composition in the Florence manuscript of the *Christian Topography* is basically the same, except that the Hand is above the altar and Abraham

⁸ Sukenik (1932).

⁹ Weiss (2005), 149.

¹⁰ Eusebius (1875), append. VI, 177–239; Wolska-Conus (1968–73), vol. 1, 146–48; Strycker (1961), 39–40.

looks up at it; and, as in the Vatican and Sinai manuscripts, labels (in Greek) identify Abraham, Isaac bound, and altar.¹¹

The Crossing of the Red Sea on the facing page of the Codex Barbus Scaligeri (fol. 16r; Fig. 4) is set out with only the most rudimentary indication; at the left, *mare rubrum* and at the right, *filiis israel transseunt rubrum mare*. Nonetheless, the spacing of the letters, especially the piling up of “Red Sea” at the left, reinforces the conclusion that the scribe had a pictorial model in front of him. In the Sinai manuscript of the *Christian Topography* (fol. 74r), the twelve springs of Elim and the water from the Rock at Kadesh—though not the Red Sea in the Crossing—are rendered as vertical strips along the margins;¹² and in the Florence codex, the vertical configuration of the sea is retained in the scene of the Gathering of Manna (fol. 103v; Fig. 5).

The Florence miniature offers a striking counterpart to the most complicated of the three pictorial fields in the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri (fol. 16v; Fig. 6), although, in this case, the Latin labels plot two distinct biblical events—the miracles of the manna and of the quails. Curiously, these are squeezed into the upper part of the page, perhaps to allow for the miniature to be painted in the large picture field left blank below it rather than actually atop the labels. The core comprises Moses, followed by Aaron and the *populus ebreorum* moving toward the right, God’s voice at the upper right, and the cloud, quails, and manna represented in line. Only the column of fire in the Florence manuscript does not occupy a position comparable to its place in the Paris diagram; instead of being placed high above Moses, it is in front of him, as in Scripture, leading the way. (In the following miniature in the Byzantine manuscript, depicting the Miracle of the Quails, the column is in a comparable place.) It is worth noting that the scene of the Miracle of the Manna, adjacent to Moses and the column of fire, appears on a fourth/fifth-century painted textile in the Abegg Stiftung in Riggisberg (Fig. 7).¹³ Moreover, there, as in the *Christian Topography*, the column is depicted as a real architectural element, with base and shaft, and, as in the miniatures, is labeled “CTYAOC IIYPPOC.”¹⁴ The

¹¹ In the relationship of the Hand of God and Abraham, the composition in the Byzantine Octateuchs is closer to the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri; cf. Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999).

¹² Cf. Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990), Figs. 142, 143.

¹³ Kötzsche (2004).

¹⁴ The two Israelites collecting manna resemble in a general way the figures in the Sinai manuscript, though their placement on a ground line is closer to the related

resemblances are not necessarily to be understood as an indication that the textile derives from an illustrated manuscript, only that Egypt may have been a source for the pictorial repertory common to the *Christian Topography* and painted cloth.

The similarity of the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri and the Middle Byzantine manuscripts of the *Christian Topography* also extends generally to the totally blank spaces. Thus, Adam and Eve were pictured and two pictures were dedicated to Noah; in the later manuscripts, these subjects are illustrated with portraits or very rudimentary narratives, well-suited to the genealogical emphasis of the text and not requiring the elaborate compositional cues laid out for the narrative scenes. In contrast, the three subjects that are designated by labels in the Paris manuscript are all related to specific *loca sancta* in the Latin account, the Sacrifice of Isaac to the *terra Canaan*, the Exodus to the *mare rubrum*, and the miracle of manna and quail to the *herimo Sinai*. That fact, together with the availability of pictorial models for these subjects, may explain why only these three episodes were fully described. Conversely, the curious lack of mention of the mountain on which Moses received the laws may account for the absence of the Sinai scene in the Latin codex. It is noteworthy that independent evidence survives of the presence of the *Christian Topography* in the Latin West during the seventh century, when it was quoted in the Canterbury biblical commentaries, there ascribed to one *Christianus historiographus*.¹⁵ Whether the model of the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri itself was fully illustrated or only had labels is impossible to determine; the verbal cues in the Paris manuscript might, in their turn, simply have been copied from descriptors in the exemplar rather than from pictures.

The transmission of pictorial compositions by means of written descriptions would go far toward explaining the remarkable homogeneity in the layouts of many works of late antique art, within which there is so much variety in the rendering of details and in style. In the synagogue pavements themselves, for example, a common repertory of the *Aron ha-Kodesh*, menorah, zodiac, and *Akedah* is rendered differently in each example; just as the labels appear in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek, so, too, the pictures vary in style. Among the manuscripts of the *Christian*

composition in manuscripts of the Octateuch; cf. Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), Figs. 716–719.

¹⁵ Bischoff and Lapidge (1994), 208–211; Lapidge (1995), 5.

Topography, the lost Smyrna codex includes a depiction of the Sacrifice of Isaac that suggests the use of a verbal mechanism (in the Smyrna codex, p. 178: Fig. 8).¹⁶ The altar is in the center of the composition, the *vox domini* is represented by an angel, the arrangement of Abraham and his son is the same, but a saddled ass replaces the sacrificial ram. Inasmuch as the ass that transported the faggots to the place of sacrifice is included in the Beth Alpha synagogue (see Fig. 2), in the Sepphoris mosaic, and in the Vatican copy of the *Christian Topography* (fol. 59r; Fig. 9), it, too, might well have been indicated in a written source; the latter, it should be noted, includes a label: ἡ ὄνος μου Αβραάμ.

Verbal models also would have facilitated the transmission of traditional compositions over distances, time, and media, as a famous letter by Paulinus of Nola attests. Written in 403 to his friend Sulpicius Severus, this letter was intended to serve Sulpicius for the decoration of his new church and baptistery in Gaul:

The reason that induced me to do this was especially, that my friend Victor—also thought the painting destined for the apse of this church very fine and wanted to bring you the texts, in case you should make a choice from the two for a painting in your newest church too.¹⁷

Paulinus also provided

Some little verses for your basilicas like votive inscriptions for sacred fountains. If any of my lines shall seem apposite, the credit for this, too, is brother Victor's, for it is through his eyes and words that I have witnessed all that you have done and continue to do in Christ the Lord. So you will assess these additional verses which I have inserted about the basilicas as written by him, for he dictated the contents by telling me of your works. The following lines will describe the baptistery.¹⁸

¹⁶ Strzygowski (1899), 60; Bernabò (1998), 64.

¹⁷ *Quod tamen ea mihi maxime ratio persuasit, quia et in huius absida designatam picturam meus Victor adamavit et portare tibi uoluit, si forte unam de duabus elegeris in hac recentiore tua pingere, in qua aequae absidam factam indicavit* (Ep. 32.17); ed. William Hartel, CSEL 29, 291–292; Davis-Weyer (1971), 20–23.

¹⁸ *Quam ob rem etiam basilicis tuis uersiculos quasi votiuos sacris fontibus titulos destinaui. si quid in his apte locutus uidebor, haec quoque fratris Victoris gratia est. cuius oculus et uerbis omnia, quae in Christo domino fecisti et agis, uidi; et ideo uersus, quos et de basilicis interposui, ipso auctore censebis, qui materiam dictauit enarratione factorum tuorum. de baptisterio igitur ipso erunt isti, de cuius pictura tantum sunt illi superiores*; (Ep. 32.5), CSEL 29, 279; tr. Davis-Weyer (1971), 18–19; Lehmann (2004); Kiely (2004).

Although Paulinus did not actually lay out the composition of the apse, he did describe the overall position of elements and provided his correspondent with the tituli for the church at Cimitile, that he himself had just finished. It is clear that Paulinus' own decorations drew on a preexistent repertory of images: the Lamb of Christ, the dove of the Holy Spirit, and Christ "standing on a rock from which four seething springs issue."¹⁹ The diverse results modern scholars have produced in attempting to reconstruct the precise form of Paulinus' apse decoration, within which there is a remarkable conformity, recapitulates the ancient process of creating concrete pictorial compositions from written descriptions.²⁰

Involving as it does an exchange of formal texts between friends, Paulinus' letter is not a perfect parallel to the process of transmission of pictures deduced from the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri, which engages workshop techniques. Nor is it like the written instructions to painters that have come to light beneath the flaked miniatures of a Latin Book of Kings known as the Quedlinburg Itala (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. theol. lat. fol. 485), that dates from Paulinus' time and may represent the more usual process:

Make a tripartite scene. Make King Solomon where he sent a messenger to King Hiram asking him to send carpenters to help with the building of the Temple....and make also the place where Solomon will sacrifice before the Lord and kneeling with extended arms will pray and where all the people with him stood and prayed before the Lord.²¹

The linear instructions, written in cursive and not meant to be seen, are distinctly different from the gold tituli atop the pictures in the fragmentary late antique Book of Kings, which identify the figures and important landscape elements and are spaced accordingly in the picture fields. The latter are like the written indications in the three spaces of the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri. Thus, in the illustration of 1 Samuel 10 the figures are named on several levels of the picture plane, and the "*monimentum Rachel*" and the "*arbor glandis*" are designated at the margins of two miniatures. A compendium of tituli derived from such visible labels would explain the similarities of the Quedlinburg Itala and the eleventh-century Byzantine Book of Kings (Rome, Bibl.

¹⁹ Epist. 32.10; CSEL 29, 286; Davis-Weyer (1971), 20.

²⁰ Engemann (1974), 21–46.

²¹ Epist. 32.10; Davis-Weyer (1971), 23–25; cf. Levin (1985).

Apost. Vat., Cod. gr. 333) better than (just) the use of “common pictorial convention(s) widespread in Antique and Byzantine art.”²²

While directions to painters of the sort revealed in the Quedlinburg Itala, if they exist in other works, are largely covered up, formal captions of the kind composed by Paulinus survive in compendia that were used throughout the Middle Ages.²³ The twenty-four tristichs attributed to the sixth-century poet Helpeidius Rusticus, for instance, include captions for pictures of the *Immolatione Isaac* and *Coturnices et manna datur Iudaeis*, but neither is sufficiently pictorial to have generated duplicative illustrations of the sort recorded in the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri.²⁴ Such captions could have functioned in a complicated process, for example, by influencing painters in the selection of pictures from preexisting pictorial models, as seems to have been the case in the construction of the ninth-century Tournon Bibles.²⁵

The Moutier-Grandval Bible (London, Brit. Lib., Cod. Add. 10546) shares tituli and many pictorial elements with the First Bible of Charles the Bald (Paris, BnF, MS lat. 1), even though it seems to have left Tours soon after it was completed around 840 and therefore was not available in the workshop when the latter was illuminated in 845. Most likely, the poems had been transcribed separately and retained in the scriptorium, and were then used to guide, though not constrain, the illuminators of the later manuscript (who may have already participated in the production of the Grandval-Moutier Bible) when they were used in constructing a similar set of illustrations. In certain cases, the painters must have reverted to the same pictorial models as well; for the Genesis frontispieces, for instance, both painters drew on an illuminated manuscript that must have resembled the fifth-century Cotton Genesis in London (Brit. Lib., Cotton MS. Otho B. VI),²⁶ but they did not always select the same detail to fit the common verbal model. Thus, when the painter of the Grandval Bible illustrated the verse, “Adam, the first man, is fashioned there to thrive,” he showed the physical forming; to

²² Levin (1985), 58.

²³ Arnulf (1997).

²⁴ Pietri (1995); Arnulf (1997), 115–136.

²⁵ Arnulf (1997), 112–123.

²⁶ Kessler (1977).

represent the same words, the illuminator of the First Bible of Charles the Bald pictured the animation.²⁷

Workshop ephemera, verbal cues of the sort suggested by the Tournonian tituli, generally did not survive, which is why the labels of the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri are so suggestive.²⁸ Moreover, ample indirect evidence attests to their importance. For example, the mosaic Theodulf of Orleans introduced into the apse of his private chapel at Germigny-des-Prés, another monument studied by Elisheva Revel-Neher and for which she suggests a possible Jewish source,²⁹ betrays their use. Inscribed in metal tesserae against a deep-blue ground, the caption recalls verses in Roman churches that Theodulf would have seen during a journey to the Eternal City six years before he undertook the building of his little oratory.³⁰ Although Theodulf may simply have remembered this feature, his use of the word “*micat*,” which is also found in the apse of SS. Cosma e Damiano, suggests that he may have relied on written notes and even sketches. Even more suggestive is the inclusion of the River Jordan, also present in the Roman apse, although the specific form of the wiggling stream at either side of the Ark of the Covenant suggests no precise pictorial connection with its Roman source. Perhaps—in the manner of the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri—Theodulf’s notes simply indicated “Iordanes,” enough to recall the sixth-century apse mosaic, but not sufficient to provide its precise pictorial form.³¹

As Revel-Neher has proposed, the form of the Ark of the Covenant might nevertheless have been interpolated from a Jewish pictorial model. Less than a century before Theodulf had composed his mosaic, Bede had expressed a particular admiration for the representation of Tabernacle in Cassiodorus’ Codex Grandior because he thought it was based on a Jewish source that conferred a certain authority on it:

These distinctions which we have found in Cassiodorus’s picture we have taken care to note here briefly, reckoning that he learnt them from the Jews

²⁷ Kessler (1977); Weitzmann and Kessler (1986). In turn, the Cotton Genesis was used in the thirteenth century as the pictorial source of the mosaics of San Marco in Venice; in that case, new captions were composed.

²⁸ Kessler (1977), 13–35.

²⁹ It is worth noting that no pictorial models survive from the same period; cf. Scheller (1995).

³⁰ Revel-Neher (1997/98).

³¹ Freeman (2001).

of old and that such a learned man had no intention of proposing as a model for our reading when he himself had not first found to be true.³²

Theodulf may also have wanted to use an “authentic” image in the same way, especially as his purpose was to subvert it. He replaced the anthropomorphic deity of his Roman sources with the Jewish Ark to argue, visually, that Christ and the instruments of sacrifice he had instituted had superseded the old law: “the Jews possessed in a material way things which, through their symbolism, were open prefigurations of things to come.”³³ By engaging Roman models, he also was able to make a point about Christian sacred images, at least in his private chapel, that was consonant with the views he expressed in his earlier *Libri carolini*, namely that the Eucharist and not pictures made by human hands were the true images of Christ.³⁴

While providing a considerable level of conformity, verbal transmission permitted and, in many ways necessitated, choice. In the manuscripts of the *Christian Topography*, for instance, Isaac bearing faggots on his shoulders—a widespread typology of Christ bearing the cross—is included in the scene of the Sacrifice of Isaac in the Vatican and Sinai copies (cf. Fig. 9) to make explicit the text’s claim that it is to Abraham that the promises were made and to his descendants, to know Christ.³⁵ But it is absent in the Florence and Smyrna versions (Figs. 1 and 8). Likewise, while both Tournon Bibles illustrate the captions with the same core compositions, each varies details, particularly the settings. The illuminator of the Exodus frontispiece in the Grandval Bible, for instance, created a unique venue for the Giving of the Laws found in the primary model by constructing it from elements copied from the Vatican Virgil to introduce a new, complex message.³⁶

Around the year 1200, the principle of using words—the major instrument of Church authorities—to ensure a degree of conformity, even while granting craftsmen a certain degree of freedom, was explicitly articulated in the preface of the extensive and widely copied

³² On Theodulf’s interest in art more broadly, cf. Nees (1991).

³³ *Haec ut in pictura Cassiodori distincta repperimus breviter adnotare curavimus ratum ab antiquis haec Iudaeis didicisse neque virum tam eruditum voluisse in exemplum legendi proponere quae non ipse prius verus esse cognovisset; De templo*, II, 28; CCSL 119A, 193; trs. Seán Connolly (1995), 67, cf. Kessler (1997/98).

³⁴ Freeman (2001), 131.

³⁵ Freeman (2001).

³⁶ Cf. Wolska-Conus (1968–73), vol. II, 148–155.

compendium of pictorial captions in the *Pictor in Carmine*. As the Cistercian author of the tract explains:

Therefore it is that, to curb the licence of painters, or rather to influence their work in churches where paintings are permitted, my pen has drawn up certain applications of events from the Old and New Testaments, with the addition in every case of a couple of verses...giving the reader a satisfactory choice....It was not my business to arrange for those who supervise such matters all that should be painted; let them look to it themselves as the fancy takes each, or as he abounds in his own sense, provided only that they seek Christ's glory, not their own.³⁷

Each of the 138 pictures from the New Testament is provided with at least two and as many as twenty-one Old Testament subjects, permitting the director of any specific project a choice. Furthermore, the pictorial realization of the subjects was largely the responsibility of the craftsman. As the surviving witnesses also suggest, tituli would have would have allowed artistic "license" to play a large role in the production of a work, even while ensuring a considerable degree of overall control.

The use of written models, in turn, functioned in the spiritualization of artistic practice. Like sacred Scripture from which they were, in fact, often derived, the words represented the literate Church authorities; when they were rendered in artistic materials by artisans and made accessible to illiterates, they were being demeaned. Paulinus had already understood this when he resisted a request to send Sulpicius a painted portrait of himself, which he dismissed as an *imago terrena*, even while he was willing to provide elaborate written descriptions of church decoration.³⁸ It is implied also in Theodulf's apse, in which the titulus instructs the viewer of the figures realized in mosaic to direct her or his prayers to the ineffable "Thunderer." Any conscious decision to consult actual pictorial models may, therefore, be understood to bear a specific earthly or historical authenticity that needed to be elevated spiritually. That may explain why the copying of Old Testament imagery—itsself more historical and worldly—can be traced in families or recensions with a clarity that the descent of New Testament pictures cannot. Moreover, it may also account for the fact that the captions accompanying Old Testament pictures often have a clear spiritualizing purpose. On the other hand, Jewish schemata such as those that underlie certain

³⁷ Wright (1985); Kessler (1994).

³⁸ James (1951); Wirth (2006).

miniatures of the *Christian Topography*, had special sanction, and their enfleshing with Christian pictures had particular meaning. Representations of the Jewish *vasa sacra* and other special elements from Hebrew Scripture thus constituted a special case and not the general rule in the making of medieval art.

The use of written models continued throughout the Middle Ages. A manuscript in Paris (BnF, MS. lat. 5577), for instance, attests to the tradition of copying captions from an existing work of art as late as the eleventh century and making them available for the construction of new depictions; it contains a transcription of the verses accompanying miniatures in the Codex Aureus of St. Emmeram (Munich, Bay. Staatsbibliothek, Clm 1400).³⁹ In another instance directly related to the subject of this contribution, a verbal source seems actually to have been preferred over an available pictorial model. Although the Monastery of St. Catherine's almost certainly possessed the manuscript of the *Christian Topography* that remains in its library to this day,⁴⁰ the fourteenth/fifteenth-century painters of the Moses Chapel (Fig. 10) apparently did not consult it as a model for the Ark of the Covenant, the menorah, cherubim, or the vestments and phylactery of the censuring priest. Instead, they engaged a living tradition of church decoration witnessed in the more-or-less contemporary church of St. Clement at Ochrid and St. Nicholas in Curtea-de-Argeș, also studied by Professor Revel-Neher. It shares with those monumental works, the symmetrical composition, tent structure, and depiction of the Jewish *vasa sacra* atop the altar, though not the details. It is only at Sinai, for example, that the menorah is pictured as a platelike holder with seven candles and the priests bear miterlike vestments. The likelihood that here, as in the earlier witnesses, the relationship among the several compositions is to be understood through verbal transmission is supported by the so-called *Painter's Manual* of Dionysius of Phourna.⁴¹ Although written only in the 1730s and an artifact of the *Turkocratia*, when artistic models were deployed to ensure uniformity throughout conquered Orthodox lands, the *Painter's Manual* apparently incorporated earlier texts. Among those may well have been the description of "Moses and Aaron celebrating in

³⁹ Cf. Conybeare (2000), 102–104.

⁴⁰ Cf. Dutton and Jeaneau (1983).

⁴¹ Weitzmann and Galavaris (1990), 52.

the tabernacle of the witness,” which Dionysius directs painters to use as an appropriate subject for decorating the church bema:⁴²

Four gold columns, over which is a tent woven with gold, and angels with their six wings outspread. Below is the gilded ark of the covenant, and on it a golden pitcher and the seven-branched candlestick and five loaves. Centrally above the ark is the Virgin in a circle with her Child. To one side of the ark is Moses, holding his rod and the tablets, and on the other side Aaron in priest's robes with a mitre on his head and holding in one hand a golden censer and in the other his flowering rod.⁴³

If, in fact, a written description of this sort circulated earlier, it would fully account for the similarities among the several fourteenth-century realizations, as far apart as Transylvania, Macedonia, and Sinai. It would also explain why each manifestation is also a relatively free adaptation of the common composition.

The *Painter's Manual* is a late example of Christian texts designed to control artists even while granting flexibility. Written guides themselves vary considerably; they include Paulinus' letters and more formal sources such as the *Pictor in Carmine* and other compendia of tituli; and their function is also documented in the Codex Barbarus Scaligeri, with its similarities to the illustrated manuscripts of the *Christian Topography*. Together with traditions learned by craftsmen and, in many cases, pictorial models as well, these contributed fundamentally to the layering and exchange of artistic imagery that Elisheva Revel-Neher has traced in her writings with such subtlety and precision.

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⁴² Trs. Hetherington (1974).

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Illustrations

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NOTES ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF EZEKIEL'S
TEMPLE VISION IN THE *POSTILLA LITTERALIS*
OF NICHOLAS OF LYRA

Walter Cahn

Nicholas of Lyra was born at Lyre, near Evreux, in Normandy around 1270. He entered the Franciscan convent at Verneuil, not far from his birthplace, as a novice when he was about thirty years old. Soon thereafter, he was sent to the Cordeliers house in Paris, where he pursued his studies in the context of the university, acquiring, among other skills, a knowledge of Hebrew that, by his own testimony, had its limitations, though it was uncommon in the Christian Latin world of his time. By 1308, he had become Master of Theology and, rising steadily in the administrative ranks of the Franciscan Order, was elected Minister Provincial for the chapters in Paris and several provinces in northern and northeastern France in 1319.

Lyra began what was to be his major work, the *Postilla litteralis* on the entire Bible, in 1322 (1323) and completed it in 1331. On March 30 of that year, he ceremonially presented a copy to Pope John XXII and was rewarded with a gift of 100 gold florins for his labors. From 1333 to 1339, he was engaged on a shorter moral commentary on the biblical text, the *Postilla moralis*. In 1325, he became Minister Provincial for chapters in central and southeastern France for a tenure of six years and he was actively involved throughout his career in the political-religious controversies that engaged the Franciscan Order. He died in 1349 and was buried in the Cordeliers house in Paris, which had been his home and base of operations throughout much of his career.¹

Lyra's oeuvre, most authoritatively catalogued nearly a century ago by Henri Labrosse, includes, beyond his biblical commentaries, two polemical tracts directed against the Jews and a number of other writings: a commentary on Peter Lombard's Sentences (now lost); treatises

¹ There is an extensive bibliography on the author, on which the following publications provide the most useful orientation: Gosselin (1970), 401–402, n. 8; the entry of Reinhardt (1993), cols. 910–915, and the introduction of Krey and Smith (2000), 1–18.

in praise of St. Francis, on the Beatific Vision, and on the Sacrament of the Eucharist; and several collections of *quodlibeta*, these last typical productions of the Scholastic milieu toward which he gravitated. His reputation was further inflated in the later Middle Ages by a number of works regarded by Labrosse as of doubtful authenticity, by others that are only extracts of authentic writings, and by an imposing corpus of mistaken attributions.² The very large number of manuscripts containing his works and those believed to be by him is estimated by Labrosse at more than 800, and by Ch.-V. Langlois at over 1200, though these figures are no more than informed guesses.³ By far the largest number—estimated by the last-named scholar as “several hundred”—are volumes containing the entire *Postilla litteralis* or parts thereof. The diffusion of these works was no doubt facilitated in Paris, where a large potential readership could be found among students and a clerical cadre of the university drawn from every part of Europe and methods of manuscript production had been developed to a comparatively high degree of efficiency. The advent of printing by movable type gave further impetus to the popularity of the work, of which there were nearly 100 editions, in whole or in part, in the years that followed the initial publication by Sweynheym and Pannartz in Rome, which bears the date 1471–1472.⁴

Several reasons account for this popularity. Earlier attempts to explicate the Scriptures had focused on single books, particularly those deemed to present the greatest difficulties—most notably the Psalms, the Song of Songs, and the Pauline Epistles. A commentary embracing the Old and New Testaments in their entirety seemed to be an unattainable ideal. The awareness that the Bible harbored three or in some accounts four levels of meaning complicated the task. The renewal of interest in the literal sense, pioneered by the Victorines in the twelfth century and stimulated by contacts with Jewish sources, intensified the need for such a comprehensive explication, since a literal understanding of the biblical text was held to be the necessary foundation for any moral, allegorical,

² Labrosse (1908 and 1923). On the character of Lyra's exegesis and its place within the history of biblical commentary in the scholastic period, see De Lubac (1964) II, pt. 2, 344–367.

³ Langlois (1927), 355–400, esp. 367 and 370ff.

⁴ Gosselin (1970), 406–418. The illustrations also made their way into the *Nuremberg World Chronicle* of Hartmann Schedel (1493), and the elevation of the gatehouse and altar are taken up in Hans Holbein the Younger's *Historiarum veteris instrumenti icones* (Lyons, 1528). Their impact on the planning of sacred architecture on the American continent is documented by Lara (2004), esp. 128ff.

or tropological interpretation. The most prominent among Lyra's Jewish authorities, the only one he mentions by name, is Rashi, whom he cites as "Rabbi Solomon."⁵ Among the Christian antecedents of the Ezekiel commentary, he occasionally mentions Jerome and Gregory the Great, but particularly Richard of Saint-Victor and Hugh of Saint-Cher, though not, so far as can be ascertained, Richard's contemporary, Andrew of Saint-Victor, who, like Richard, was the author of a literal commentary on this prophecy.⁶

Lyra's *Postilla litteralis super totam Bibliam* can be said to have had an antecedent in this large ambition in the biblical studies of the Dominican Hugh of Saint-Cher (c. 1195–1263). After 1230, the latter, likely with the help of a team of collaborators, produced a commentary that concerns, in a somewhat selective fashion, the four senses of the entire Scripture. It was also probably Hugh of Saint-Cher who developed or at least popularized the short postil (from the Latin *post illa* or *post illa verba*), a brief explanatory sentence that replaced the more developed glosses favored by earlier interpreters. Like the commentary of Nicholas, Hugh's *Postilla* eventually became available in printed editions.⁷ The printed versions conferred a greater degree of unity on the work (as well as the title by which it is presently known) than it possessed when it circulated piecemeal in manuscript form; in this, it differs from Lyra's work, which from the beginning was conceived in its material presentation as a single unit. But what more importantly sets Lyra's work apart from that of his predecessor is its emphasis on the literal understanding, through which Lyra hoped to persuade his audience that the messianic claims of Jesus and the supersession of the Synagogue by the Church were well anchored in the Old Testament. To this should be added the demonstrative value that his work accorded to graphic illustration,

⁵ On this topic, see the pioneering study of Hailperin (1963) and more recently, Bunte (1994).

⁶ Signer (2000).

⁷ I have consulted the edition of J. Amerbach and A. Koberger, *Biblia cum Postillis Hugo De Sancto Charo* (Basel, 1498–1502), of which Vol. V contains the exposition on the Prophets and I–II Maccabees. On the author and his work, see most recently Bataillon, Dahan, and Gy (2004), esp. Dahan's essay, 65–69, on Hugh's exegetical procedures, and earlier, Smalley (1964) *passim*; on the manuscripts, Stegmüller III (1951), No. 3631–3784), and *Supplementum* IX, (1977), idem, and Stirnemann (2004), 31–42. Insofar as could be determined, the exegesis of Hugh of Saint-Cher was not illustrated, and Stirnemann, 33, writes: "*le décor [en]est d'habitude très modeste, sinon absent.*"

aspects of which are the subject of the present brief, and necessarily preliminary, essay.⁸

The large number of the surviving manuscripts of Nicholas's *Postilla* has tended to discourage scholarly curiosity in the history of the text and the patterns of its transmission, a situation exacerbated by the fact that printed editions can be consulted by modern readers interested in the work with comparative ease. A German translation of the *Postilla* on Psalms was made by Heinrich von Mügeln (1372), and other versions, for the most part likewise limited to single biblical books, in French, Flemish, Italian, Castilian, and Catalan, came into being in the later Middle Ages, but a modern, critical edition of the original Latin text has yet to be undertaken. The above-mentioned study of Labrosse assembled some of the manuscript evidence, and Langlois particularly sought to identify the earliest-known witnesses, some of which he believed to have been executed in the lifetime of the author and perhaps under his direct supervision. The list of manuscripts found in Friedrich Stegmüller's *Repertorium* (1950–1961) is the most extensive that has appeared to date, and though incomplete and marred by errors, the very impressive accomplishment that this vast census of biblical commentaries of the Middle Ages undoubtedly represents has not yet been superseded.⁹

Lyra's procedure in the composition of the *Postilla* can be traced in exceptional detail through the author's habit of embedding the dates of the completion of various parts into the text, dates that were in many instances transmitted in later copies, to the not infrequent confusion of modern cataloguers. He began his commentary with the canonical books of the Bible, starting with Genesis, on which he was working in the month of April of 1322, and concluded it with Romans in May 1329, followed later that year with the rest of the Pauline Epistles and the Apocalypse shortly thereafter. He then turned to the noncanonical books, beginning with Tobit and terminating his labors with I–II Esdras on 20 March 1331 with words of thanksgiving. Having earlier treated the body of Ezekiel with the Major and Minor Prophets, he had omitted, probably because of the difficulties it presented, the final section (Ch. 40–48) with the Vision of the Temple on the Mountain,

⁸ The topic received attention earlier in an article by Helen Rosenau (1974), and more summarily, in her book (1979), 39–43.

⁹ Stegmüller IV (1954), Nos. 5829–5923, and *Supplementum* IX (1977), idem. A welcome addition to this census is Reinhardt's thorough survey of Lyra manuscripts in Spain (1987), which could be usefully extended to libraries in other parts of the world.

to which he now returned, completing it on the eve of the Feast of the Trinity (June 13) 1332.

Among the oldest surviving manuscripts of the *Postilla* that can be dated with precision are the first two volumes from a set of seven from the library of Reims Cathedral (Reims, Bib. mun. 171–177), written in Paris between 1331 and 1335;¹⁰ a volume in Paris, BNF lat. 461, which, according to an inscription, was completed in the capital in 1343;¹¹ parts of a set thought on somewhat problematic evidence to have been given to the monastery of Belval in the Ardennes before 1347 (Charleville, Bib. Mun. Ms. 267);¹² and a volume from Clairvaux dated 1350 (Troyes, Bib. Mun. 152).¹³ Others can on reasonable grounds be attributed to the second half of the fourteenth century. The entire work was most commonly made available in three stout volumes, the first two containing in a fairly consistent, though not identical order, the books of the Old Testament and the third those of the New Testament. But the relative importance attributed to some of the biblical books or perhaps only the desire for greater ease of handling led in due course to “editions” of shorter parts of the *Postilla*, such as those containing the Major and Minor Prophets, often completed by I–II Maccabees, or the first-mentioned writings (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel), if not one or a combination of these only.

In this earliest, and one is tempted to say, Parisian phase of its history, more or less embracing the fourteenth century, the text of the *Postilla* was normally written out in a heavily abbreviated Gothic book hand forming compact blocks, with the biblical *lemmata*, underlined in red or brown ink, followed by the brief explanatory sentence. Illustrations were foreseen from the beginning, as is indicated by phrases announcing them, such as “*Ad capiendum vero facilius quae dicta sunt et dicenda ponitur hic talis figura*,” “*...et accipiunt iste mensura intra parietes per*

¹⁰ See Stirnemann and Marichal (1965), V, 233 and 235, on the somewhat complicated history of this set. Langlois (1927), 374, notes that François Feuardent, who in 1588 planned a new edition of Lyra's *Postilla*, never realized, mentions “*manuscripts originaux*” of the work, then said to be preserved in the library of the Franciscan house at Verneuil, where Lyra had become a Minorite. Nothing further is known about this set.

¹¹ Lauer (1939), 160.

¹² Samaran and Marichal (1965), V, 568, point out that the different format and dimensions of the eight tomes that comprise this set make it difficult to say which among them make up the original gift of five volumes. Langlois (1927), 375, cites the Reims, Paris, and Charleville manuscripts as having been executed “*du vivant de l'auteur, et peut-être sous sa direction*.”

¹³ Samaran and Marichal (1965), V, 457, and Bougerol (1982), 9–11.

modum hic figuratum,” and “...ut melius apparebit in figura sequenti.” As against these generally unassuming, didactic illustrations, the manuscripts display large and artistically more assertive images of the Isaiah’s vision of the Lord with the six-winged seraphs (6:1–3) and Ezekiel’s opening vision of the heavenly chariot’s four symbolic creatures. The latter is in the two contrasting versions of the Hebrew and Christian expositors, which function as prefatory miniatures for their respective books. Other subjects occasionally make an appearance, among them portraits of the author at the beginning of the work, but only the remarkably vivid compositions of these celestial visions can have a serious claim to have been part of an original intention on Nicholas’s part, codified in the form of a model for subsequent use.

Lyra’s interest in the divinely inspired architecture of the Bible and his visual reconstructions thereof concern four separate sites. The first is the design of Noah’s Ark, of which he offers variant versions, one *secundum doctores catholicos*, the other *secundum doctores hebraicos*, a pairing found earlier in manuscripts of Peter Comestor’s *Historia Scholastica* and Peter of Poitiers’s *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi*, with which he was no doubt familiar. The plan of the Desert Tabernacle and drawings of its sacred furniture (Ex. 25–31) are tributary to a long tradition, only intermittently documented in Christian art, but, as the studies of Elisheva Revel-Neher have shown, vigorously exemplified in the Jewish tradition.¹⁴ Lyra was on his own with the reconstruction of the Solomonic Temple, and his designs of the structure and its furnishings are the most detailed and extensive until the sustained efforts to comprehend the biblical description of the early modern period. For Ezekiel’s visionary Temple, on the other hand, there was a carefully worked-out precedent in Richard of Saint-Victor’s twelfth-century reconstruction.¹⁵ Although Lyra’s interpretation was effectively to supplant its authority, it probably fortified the author in the conviction that illustrations could usefully supplement the verbal explanation, encouraged him to extend the enterprise to other biblical structures, and provided a working methodology for doing so.

Beyond what might be called the “standard” copies of the *Postilla* that emerged from Paris, the work and its author came over time to tran-

¹⁴ Revel-Neher (1984) and (1988).

¹⁵ Richard of Saint-Victor, *In visionem Ezechielis* (Pat. lat. 196, 527–600); Cahn (1994) and Schröder (2001). The most complete list of manuscripts of Richard’s commentary to date is found in Goy (2005), 114–118.

scend to a degree the dimensions of the merely practical or utilitarian. Specially commissioned manuscripts of greater refinement reflecting this enhanced regard eventually came into being: a profusely illustrated copy of the commentary on Genesis, left unfinished, made between 1395 and 1402 for Gian Galeazzo Visconti, duke of Milan (Paris, BNF lat. 364);¹⁶ a collection in five volumes executed between 1432 and 1470 for Per (Pedro) Afán de Ribera, a nobleman of Seville and archdeacon of the church of Compostela (Seville, Bibl. Univ. Mss. 332/145–149);¹⁷ and a copy in seven volumes written for Guy Bernard, bishop of Langres in eastern France from 1454 to 1481 (Paris, BNF lat. 11792–11978).¹⁸ The last-mentioned work is a luxury production in which, like a number of other copies of the later fifteenth century, Lyra's economical schemata are replaced by a sequence of narrative, fully painted illustrations.

The manuscript history of the work over a period of 150 years and its pan-European diffusion affected its illustrative component in other ways. From the beginning, the proportions of the diagrams are not always consistent with the measurements furnished by the prophecy. Spaces described as squares and so generally depicted in the copies of Richard's commentary tend more often than not to be elongated to fit the variable spaces left in the text column by the scribes; elevations give buildings the appearance of being towerlike, or in any case much taller than the specifications of the text would indicate (Figs. 4 and 8), or show them inconsistently proportioned in relation to one another. The effect of regional styles and a certain striving to "modernize" Lyra's reconstructions in line with more recent architectural conceptions or representational conventions can be observed, although plotting the contours of this process would require a fuller documentation of the evidence.

The printed editions, by which Lyra's illustrations are now best known, themselves depart in a number of instances from his original designs. Thus, the illustration attached to the description of the Holy City with its twelve gates corresponding to the tribes of Israel that concludes the prophecy (Ez. 48:30–35) is depicted in the manuscripts as a simple

¹⁶ Avril, Gousset, and Aniel (2005), 138–141, No. 64.

¹⁷ Santiago de Compostela (2000), 195–196, No. 35. I have not had access to Laguna Paul (1979).

¹⁸ Avril and Reynaud (1993), 183–184, No. 98.

square with arched openings (Fig. 1),¹⁹ whereas the Koberger and later editions feature in the same place a more modern birds-eye view of a city prospect (Fig. 2). Yet in spite of these alterations, which make recourse to the evidence provided by the early manuscripts indispensable, printing stabilized the tradition and extended its reach far and wide. Modern offset reproduction in recent years has indeed further added to its (shelf) life.

In Lyra's demonstration, like that of Richard of Saint-Victor, the sequence of diagrams tracking the biblical text is made in progressive fashion to reveal the essential features of the Temple complex. The first is a ground plan that defines the sacred precinct as a square with an inner atrium at the center surrounded by triple concentric walls that rise along the four cardinal directions. The second, reiterating this basic scheme, inscribes the location of the gates on the square at the center of the walls along the eastern, northern, and southern sides (Ez. 40:6–37). The eastern gatehouse and its approaches, described by the prophet and measured for his benefit by his guide, are taken up next and illustrated with the help of a ground plan and façade elevation. This structure, too, had been the subject of an extended explanation by Richard of Saint-Victor.

The two reconstructions, however, differ substantially. Richard was interested, and Lyra clearly much less so, in the effect on the design of buildings constructed on sloping terrain. He tried with the help of geometry to calculate the inclination of the Ezekiel's holy mountain, and he provided a lateral elevation of the gatehouse in order to show the diminished height of its rear wall and the stepped procession upward of chambers within. While his gatehouse appears to be free standing, Lyra's reconstruction (Figs. 3 and 4)²⁰ is attentive to its connection with the surrounding wall. He reasoned that the *vestibulum* of the gatehouse (Ez. 40:8–9), which Richard had placed within the structure, was in fact a separate, low-slung building abutting the wall, in whose narrow extremities were located the chambers (*thalami*) mentioned by the prophet (Ez. 40:10), three to the left and three to the right. This

¹⁹ Utrecht, Univ. Library Ms. 252 (3.B.5), a copy of Lyra's *Postilla* on the Prophets given by Otto van Moerdrecht to the Carthusian house at Utrecht in 1424 (Van der Horst, 1989, 9, No. 27).

²⁰ My illustrations are drawn from a three-volume set of the *Postilla* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 157–59, from the Paris Carmelites, undated, but best situated toward the middle of the fourteenth century; see Molinier (1885–98), I, 53–54.

arrangement made it necessary to assume that the gatehouse (*porticus*), a two-storied structure 50 cubits high, was situated further back, straddling the wall itself and extending into the space to the rear. Lyra also took into account the necessity of providing access to the upper story of the structure, an issue that the prophet does not address, and Richard in consequence also failed to consider. He therefore provided his gatehouse reconstruction with symmetrical, circular staircase towers—the meaning he chose to assign to the term *frontes* (Ez. 40:14)—observing further that they were “like those to be seen in the doorways of castles and other notable edifices.” He realized, however, that since the space in front of the wall was occupied by the *vestibulum*, these towers could not depart from ground level but had to emerge into view only further up, above the vestibule’s roof line, leaving the lower story of the staircases (presumably) embedded in the thickness of the wall. This somewhat complicated scheme posed a further, more specifically artistic problem: since the lower level of the gatehouse with the entrance lay hidden behind the vestibule, it could not be adequately represented, and thus appears in the illustration as a blank wall.

The following section of the exposition and accompanying figures—two in Richard’s commentary, one in Lyra’s more detailed view (Fig. 5)—are intended to clarify the layout of the eastern half of the complex containing the outer and inner atrium (*atrium exterioris et interioris*) with its porticoes and stone pavements. Separated from the Temple and its adjoining structures in the western section by a wall, it was approached by a courtyard flanked by thirty chambers (Ez. 40:17) leading to an inner enclosure. Within this enclosure, positioned toward the far end of the space, stood the Altar of the Sacrifices (*altare holocausti*), given special prominence in Lyra’s graphic demonstration by being shown in a full, head-on view, rather than in plan like the other elements of the site. Around this inner space, Lyra situated the chambers (*gazophylacia*) of the singers, of the priests who had custody of the sanctuary, and of the sons of Zadok, the first two along the entrance at the eastern end of the space and the last in the upper right corner near the altar (Ez. 40:44–47).

With the words “*Et introduxit me in vestibulum templi...*” (Ez. 41:1), we enter into the space to the west, the sacred precinct proper, entirely surrounded by a wall and accessible only through a narrow opening in the middle of the partition separating it from the *pars anteriori edificiorum templi* just elucidated, as Lyra terms it. The comments that our author devotes to the description of the Temple that follows

are illustrated by a pair of diagrams (Fig. 6). The first is a plan of the structure with its sequence of three separate rooms culminating at the western end by the Holy of Holies (Ez. 41:1–5). In the second, Lyra undertakes to explain the design of the triple-storied lateral walls of the structure, one of the most difficult passages of Ezekiel's vision. He is particularly concerned to refute Hugh of Saint-Cher's view that these *latera* should be understood as the stalls (*sedilia*)—sixty-six in number, according to that author's calculations—that monks or secular clergy would occupy in their churches.

Lyra's comments on this topic extend well beyond his postil of customary length and are for reasons that are open to conjecture exceptionally vigorous in tone. The *Sanctum sanctorum*, he reasons, being reserved for the high priest, could not accommodate such seats, whereas Hugh's faulty calculations would have rendered his stalls *inutilia et inepta* for sitting and their presence, lastly, would impede movement. He believed instead that these *latera*, following Jewish interpretation, should be taken to be identical with the "appendages" surrounding the Temple of Solomon, of which he had presented a graphic reconstruction in his commentary on the biblical description of that monument (3 Reg. 6:5). It is thus rather odd that the diagram that accompanies this argument should feature not Lyra's own resolution, but Hugh's version with the *sedilia*, accompanied by a warning that this interpretation should be rejected.

Two more illustrations pertaining to the western zone of the complex follow. The first (Fig. 7, above) is a plan of the area in its entirety, showing the Temple, flanked north and south by the identical "separate buildings" (*aedificii separati*) and to the east, between the Temple and the wall, by a more shadowy set of "chambers" that Lyra fails to comment on and the drawing similarly omits (Ez. 42:1–10). These structures, according to the prophecy, were reserved for the consumption by the priests of the sacrificial meats and the storage of their vestments (Ez. 42:13–14), though Lyra's commentary notes with regard to the northern one (*aedificium vergens ad aquilonem*) that this is the area where cemeteries are often found in churches of his time. These structures measured 100 cubits in length, 50 cubits in width, with three stories, each story (*mansio*) 25 cubits high for a total height of 75 cubits. Lyra's plan shows them with two rooms at ground level, each of which could be entered through doors situated in their long outer sides. Separated as they were from the walls of the Temple by a space 20 cubits wide

(Ez. 40:3), and standing on sloping ground, their upper stories projected above ground, but the lowest level descended in gradual fashion below the surface, as might a cellar (*sicut in cellaris*).

The second illustration, showing the three structures in elevation (Fig. 8), seeks to make these arrangements clear, with the Temple standing on a hillock and towering over the smaller utilitarian buildings north and south. As imagined by the commentary, the Temple was a three-storied edifice totaling 120 cubits in height. Although the prophet seems to mention only a single winding passageway leading to the upper stories (Ez. 41:7), Lyra's reconstruction gives the edifice a pair of symmetrical staircase towers. To those who say that one would be sufficient and the second is superfluous, he replies that the duplication would enhance security by making access to the upper floors easier in case of fire and that such two-tower façades were commonly found in major churches. The ground plan shows these turrets to close off an ambulatory-like passage subdivided into cells or chapels (shown in the manuscripts as an alternating sequence of blue and red squares) that surrounds the central space on three sides and is intended to depict the pavement level of the complicated set of galleries (*latera* or *appenditia*) that were said to fill the lateral walls of the Temple. Although the commentary does not explicitly say so, church architecture of Lyra's time seems to have been a point of reference.

In Richard of Saint-Victor's ground plan of the Temple, these galleries are shown to be wooden platforms resting on beams inserted into the wall on both sides and on three levels, as seems to be specified in the prophecy (Ez. 41:5–6). For inexplicable reasons, the page reserved for a second view of the structure—most likely of the façade—is blank in the Saint-Victor copy of the work, probably the original manuscript, and none of the known later copies make good this omission. Lyra, however, as we have already seen in the matter of the eastern gatehouse, was a man of façades, or, to put it more precisely, for whom the façade was the privileged embodiment of the building as a whole. He must thus have felt that the lacuna left by his predecessor had in the interest of clarity and consistency to be filled.

With regard to the troublesome *latera*, his scheme of superimposed pillars and beams, to the extent that it is wholly intelligible to the reader, is largely in agreement with Richard's proposed reconstruction. But he reasoned that this triple tier of galleries rose up on the exterior not to

the full height of the building, as Richard thought, but no more than two-thirds of the way up the wall along the lowest story in order not to interfere with the illumination of the interior, while the space above was to remain unencumbered by such constructions to preserve its beautiful appearance (*aspectu pulchritudinis*). Perhaps he was more cautious than Richard, for an illustration of the arrangement he envisioned is not to be found in the manuscripts. The frontal elevation in some copies does include a view of the narrow side of one of these three-story extensions along the bottom of the left staircase tower with an inscription that informs us by way of explanation for its rather understated presence that “this appendage lies behind the spiral staircase and thus cannot be [graphically] depicted” (Fig. 7, below, left).

The final view of Ezekiel’s Temple in Lyra’s *Postilla* combines the parts treated separately earlier into a single, comprehensive picture of the entire complex (Fig. 9). The only new element is the river that is said in the prophecy to course from its spring under the threshold of the sanctuary and descend from west to east through the sacred landscape (Ez. 47:1–2). As the text specifies, the stream passes on the southern side of the altar (of the Sacrifices) in the outer atrium on its way through the right of the eastern gatehouse and the outer wall beyond. This vision is not taken up in Richard of Saint-Victor’s more compressed commentary or its illustrations, and since the information it supplies is largely redundant, one may wonder why Lyra thought it worthwhile to include it. In his commentary on these and the following verses, Lyra refutes the opinion of those who, following the Latin tradition, believed that the river when it penetrated the atrium divided into four separate streams, and he agrees instead with the Hebrew interpretation that the waters flowed without interruption from their source to the boundary of the sacred site. This is the view that his illustrations evidently affirm. But in the final analysis, it may be that he thought that a concluding image filling an entire page and bringing together the results of conjectures extracted step by step from an often obscure and possibly partially garbled text ended matters on an appropriately compelling note.

The intimate relationship between word and image in Lyra’s Ezekiel commentary makes these rather artless designs seem so transparent and unproblematic that one may need to remind oneself that they purport to make accessible the singular, often unfathomable vision experienced by an inspired individual, which patristic authors and their early medi-

eval epigones had generally thought to lie beyond the reach of material reconstruction.²¹ Richard of Saint-Victor had controversially shown the way, though without attracting any immediate followers, and the Jewish sources familiar to Lyra may have contributed to the practice and to its legitimation, though this remains an open question.²² The subject also belongs to the development of architectural representation in the later Middle Ages and its technical vocabulary. Lyra and his illuminators unavoidably interpreted the biblical description in light of contemporaneous experience, pointing, as we have seen, to construction of his time in order to make aspects of Ezekiel's Temple intelligible to his readers and sprinkling his exposition with vernacular equivalents of the Latin terminology. Giving tangible form to the prophetic vision, finally, brought into play criteria grounded in aesthetic judgment, for who could doubt that every feature of the sacred precinct had been conceived according to the highest rules of art?

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²¹ Smalley (1964), 108–110.

²² For a parallel development on the Jewish side, see Wischnitzer (1974). Lyra's diagram of the division of the Promised Land among the Tribes (Ez. 48:1–29) is found as well in the commentaries of Rashi and Richard of Saint-Victor (Cahn, 1994, 67–68), and Sed-Rajna (1993/94), esp. 151ff.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Holy City with twelve gates, plan, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super prophetas*, 1423–1425 (Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 252, fol. 210v).
 Fig. 2. Holy City with twelve gates, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.
 Fig. 3. Eastern gatehouse of the Temple complex, ground plan, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam*, middle or third quarter of the fourteenth century (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 120v).
 Fig. 4. Eastern gatehouse of the Temple complex, elevation, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 121).
 Fig. 5. Outer and inner atrium of the Temple complex (eastern part), ground plan, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 122v).
 Fig. 6. Plan of the Temple and interior with *sedilia*, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.
 Fig. 7. Ground plan of the western part of the complex with the Temple and adjoining structures (above) and elevation of the Temple façade (below, left) and adjoining structure (right), from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.
 Fig. 8. The Temple and adjoining structures, elevation, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 124v).
 Fig. 9. Plan of the entire Temple complex with spring, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 131).

NOAH'S ARK AND THE ARK OF THE COVENANT IN SPANISH AND SEPHARDIC MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPTS

Andreina Contessa

This essay presents the results of a short investigation into the relationship between the ark of Noah and the Ark of the Covenant whose shapes and significance are interrelated in the Bible as well as in its exegetical and visual interpretations. The ark of Noah is the only biblical wooden receptacle that, like the Ark of Covenant, was built by the command of God, following precise instructions and measurements. An interrelation between these sacred vessels is attested to in early Jewish sources. Assimilation of the ark of Noah to the meaning of the Ark of Covenant was known in the Christian world, although Christian interpretations of the Flood differ greatly from those of the Jews. Visual links between the two objects are present in several early Christian and Jewish depictions, where the representation of Noah's ark as a wooden box standing on feet, while inconsistent with the biblical description, is similar to that of the Ark of Covenant. The shape and iconographical features attributed to Noah's ark in Western medieval Christian representations, especially in Spain and Catalonia, throw into relief the similitude between the two vessels. Textual aspects are extremely relevant to the definition of the external form of the ark, and it is for this reason that this investigation begins with a short analysis of some aspects of the biblical account and its Greek and Latin translations.

The form and size of Noah's ark are derived mainly from the description in the Bible that says very little about the external shape of the vessel. According to Genesis 6:9–22, Noah's ark was a large receptacle covered in pitch, with a door at the side and an opening on the upper level. This generic description of the exterior contrasts with God's precise instructions concerning the building materials, the measurements, and the interior arrangements: the ark was to be of gopher wood (probably cedar beams), 300 cubits in length, 50 cubits in breadth, and 30 cubits in height, and was to have three decks divided into compartments (Hebrew *qinnim*). The most problematic passage is Genesis 6:16, which deals with the external shape of the top of the ark. It is not clear in fact if the "light" (Hebrew *tsohar*) mentioned there was a window or

an opening in the roof. In the Greek and Old Latin translations, the word was taken as referring to the order to finish the ark in one cubit, implying that the ark had straight sides topped by a sloping roof.¹

Various ambiguities in its description in the biblical Hebrew text as well as in the Greek and Latin translations possibly caused the ark to be variously imagined by the exegetes and represented in disparate ways in Jewish and Christian art since an early period.²

In fact, the Noah's ark as described in the Bible had an oblong boxlike shape that did not bode well for its staying afloat for the duration of the Flood, until it came to rest on the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 8:4). Its huge size—dismissed as “fanciful exaggeration” by modern scholars of ancient seafaring—greater than any seagoing ship ever built by the Greeks or the Romans at the most advanced stage of their technical accomplishments, was symbolically necessary for a ship that played a crucial role in the history of the world.³ Size and measurements, of course, depend on the interpretation of the cubits. As we will see, measurement played a very important part in determining the shape and meaning of Noah's ark, as it does for any object implying a construction ordered by God and linked to the divine presence.

Sacred Constructions

As He did for Noah's ark, God gave precise instructions and measurements for the construction of different parts of the Temple and some of its implements (I Kings 6:1–26, 7:23–37). God had similarly issued orders concerning the Temple's antecedent, the Sanctuary in the wilderness described in Exodus, where meticulous measurements are given not only for the Sanctuary, its curtains, and its court (26; 27:9–18), but also for the Ark of the Covenant (25:10–21), the table for the shewbread (25:23–30), and the golden altar of *shittim* wood (27:1–2).

¹ The word *tsohar* was translated “make compact,” implying that the ark was to be made compact and narrowed at the top. The Old Latin rendered the verse: “*et in cubito consummabis summitatem*.” *Vetus Latina*, 2 *Genesis* 109–110. Jerome translated it as “*fenestra*” in the Vulgate, a rendering shared with some Jewish sources, such as *Targum Neophiti* and R. Abba bar Kahana in *Genesis Rabbah*, 31:11; *Midrash Rabbah. Genesis*, Freedman and Simon (1983), 1, 244–245.

² On the different types of arks, see Lezzi (1994), 301–324; Friedman (1997), 123–143; Contessa (2004), 257–270.

³ Patai (1998), 4–6.

The measurements of both arks are expressed in cubits, whose conjectured value in terms of present-day units is either 52.1 or 44.6 cm.⁴ The smaller value might correspond to the “ancient measure” of II Chronicles 3:3, interpreted by Rabbi Judan in the *Midrash Genesis Rabbah* as Noah’s cubit, called the *tibikon*, with reference to *tebah*, the Hebrew name for Noah’s ark.⁵ According to Jewish tradition, the cubit used in the building of Noah’s ark was, in fact, destined to be used again for the construction of Solomon’s Temple. Discussion on the value of the cubit is found also in Origen’s and Augustine’s writings.⁶

Measurements and divine instructions are not the only elements shared by the Sanctuary/Temple and the ark of Noah: similarities can be distinguished between the container built by Noah and the Ark of the Covenant, another famous wooden receptacle. In the Septuagint both were assigned the same Greek word, *kibotos*, though different words, *tebah* and *aron*, are used in the Hebrew text. On the other hand, *tebah* as used for the floating chest that saved the child Moses (Ex. 2:3) was translated by *thibis*.

According to Marguerite Harl, the lexical assimilation of the two objects in the Septuagint shows that the Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria who translated the text into Greek in the third century BCE attributed a common shape and function to them.⁷ Both receptacles are associated with covenants, the one promised to Noah (Gen. 6:18) and the other established on Mount Sinai (Ex. 18:5); both are destined to enclose and preserve something fundamental to the salvation of humanity in the first case and the people of Israel in the second. Harl also noted other lexical choices in the Septuagint that may be interpreted as intended to give Noah’s ark nobility and to connect it with the Sanctuary or to Temple implements. The adjective *tetragonos* attributed to the wooden beams (*lignis quadratis* in the Old Latin version), for example, certainly alludes to the squared shape of the beams, but the same word is used for the squared Sanctuary implements, such as the golden altar of Exodus

⁴ For the values of the cubit, see *Encyclopedia Judaica* 16, 376–379.

⁵ The length of the building was after the ancient [lit. first] measure (II Chronicles 3:3). *Midrash Rabbah Genesis*, 31, 10. Rabbi Huna thought that *tibikon* comes from Thebes, an ancient city in Egypt, where this measure was used for building. See also Fontana (1998), 58–109, and Fontana (2007), 17–84.

⁶ Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV, 41; Chadwick (1980), 217; Augustine, *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum*, I, 4–5 (PL 34:549).

⁷ Harl (1987), 15–43.

27:1 and 30, or 41:21–22.⁸ In particular, the link between Noah's ark and the Ark of the Covenant suggested in the Septuagint survived in the Vulgate, where Jerome, despite his attachment to the Hebrew text, translated both *aron* and *tebah* by the Latin word *arca* and rendered the child Moses' *tebah* as *fiscella*.

The Two Arks in the Medieval Latin West

The link between the two arks was transmitted to the West not only through the Old Latin biblical text but also by means of the analogy drawn by Philo of Alexandria in his *Questions and Answers on Genesis*.⁹ Philo's comparison of the features of the two arks greatly influenced Ambrose of Milan in the late fourth century. Indeed, it is through Ambrose that there was an awareness of this ancient comparison between the two receptacles in the Latin exegetical tradition.¹⁰ Like Philo, Ambrose speaks about a square Noah's ark, associated with the characteristics and proportions of the human body; when he compares Noah's ark to the Ark of the Covenant, he explains that the second was "more excellent" (*praestantior*) than the first because it was overlaid in gold, imperishable, incorruptible, and permanent.¹¹ In certain cases the quality of *imputribilis*, incorruptible, is also attributed to the ark of Noah. This is found in Augustine,¹² who considered the two receptacles to be of equal value, Paulinus of Nola,¹³ and the Venerable Bede.¹⁴

Except for Philo's influence, which was widely invoked by the Church Fathers, Jewish commentaries only partially influenced Christian exegesis, through the literal, narrative commentaries, such as those of Ephrem and Jerome, which existed side by side with the typological and allegorical speculations.¹⁵

⁸ Similarly the attribute *asesptos*, incorruptible, is used for both the ark of Noah and the Ark of the Covenant to indicate that the first was built with the same material as the sacred furniture, *ibid.* 22–24. For the renderings in the Old Latin translation, see *Vetus Latina*, 108.

⁹ Philo Judaeus, *Questions and Answers on Genesis*, Suppl. I, II, 4; Marcus (1953).

¹⁰ Ambrose, *De Noe et de arca*, VI, 13–15 (PL 14:368–369).

¹¹ Ambrose, *De Noe et de arca*, VII, 16–23 (PL 14:369–371).

¹² Augustine, *In Iohannes*, 6, 19 (PL 35, 1334–1335).

¹³ Paulinus of Nola, *Epistulae*, XLIV (PL 61:387–388); CSEL 29, Epistula 44, 372.

¹⁴ Venerable Bede, *De tabernaculo*, I, IV (PL 91:401B).

¹⁵ See Saint Jerome's *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*; Hayward (1995), 129–136; Levene (1951); Féghali (1977–78), 67–86. Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on Paradise*, II, 12–13,

The early Latin Church Fathers' exegesis of the Noah story centered on the eschatological dimension of the flood and its ecclesiological and baptismal interpretation.¹⁶ Since very early times, Noah's ark with all its inhabitants was synonymous with the Church, saving the seed of all forms of life.¹⁷ This allegorical interpretation has points of similarity with the explanation of the Tabernacle as a type of the Incarnation, and the incorruptible wood of the Ark of the Covenant as a prefiguration of the nature of Christ's body.¹⁸ Many exegetes, including Isidore of Seville and Bede, define a clear Christological link with Noah's ark.¹⁹

On many occasions, especially when dealing with the symbolism of numbers and measurements, the Latin Church Fathers speak about Noah's ark and then immediately refer to the Ark of the Covenant. This occurs, for example, in Jerome's *Commentary on the Gospels*²⁰ and in Bede's widely known book *De tabernaculo*.²¹ When Jerome speaks about the Temple described in Ezekiel's vision (Ezek. 42), he also mentions Noah's ark and compares their measurements and symbolism, proposing a complex Christological interpretation of the numbers.²² The commentary recurs in almost the same words in *Hrabanus Maurus*.²³ Ambrose's and Jerome's commentaries are widely quoted by the Venerable Bede,²⁴ for whom Noah's ark, the Sanctuary, and the Temple are all images of the Church.²⁵ These three structures are also mentioned together by John Scotus Erigena, who called them "*mystica opera mensurata*."²⁶ Later on, in the twelfth century, Hugh of St. Victor, making Noah's ark the basis for a moral allegory, defined all the mystical constructions of the Bible

compares the hierarchic division of the ark's inhabitants with that of the people on Mount Sinai and with the arrangement of Paradise; Brock (1998).

¹⁶ Daniélou (1961), 65–76; Lewis (1978), 42–81; Frot (1986), 335–348.

¹⁷ Justin, *Dialogus cum Tryphone Iudaeo*, 138, 1–3 (PG 6:793–794); Tertullian, *De idolatria*, 24 (PL 1:696), and idem, *De Baptismo*, VIII (PL 1:1208); Paulinus of Nola, *Epistulae*, XLIV (PL 61:387–388); CSEL 29, Epistula 44, 372; Cassiodorus, *In Psalterium expositio*, XXX (PL 70:910); Gregory the Great, *Epistulae*, XI, 46 (PL 77:1164–1165).

¹⁸ Jerome, *Epistulae*, XLVI (PL 22, 486; CSEL 54, 334–338; Venerable Bede, *In Cantica canticorum*, II, 1 (PL 91:1100); idem, *De tabernaculo*, III (PL 91:401).

¹⁹ Jerome, *In Ezechiel*, XIII (PL 25:414, 417); Gregory the Great, *Epistolae*, XLVI (PL 77:1165); Isidore of Seville, *In Genesin*, VII (PL 83:286); Venerable Bede, *De tabernaculo*, I, IV (PL 91:403–404).

²⁰ Jerome, *Expositio quattuor Evangeliorum*, Prologus (PL 30:533).

²¹ Venerable Bede, *De tabernaculo*, III–IV (PL 91:401).

²² Jerome, *In Ezechiel*, XIII (PL 25:414).

²³ Hrabanus Maurus, *In Ezechiel*, XVII (PL 110:987).

²⁴ Venerable Bede, *De tabernaculo*, I, IV (PL 91:401).

²⁵ Venerable Bede, *In Esdram et Nehemiam*, III (PL 91:833–834).

²⁶ John Scotus Erigena, *De divisione naturae*, III (PL 122:742).

(Temple, Tabernacle, Ark of the Covenant, ark of the flood) as *domus Dei*, whose function is to adumbrate the abode of God in the soul.²⁷

Imaging the Two Arks: Shifting Shapes in Catalonia and Castile

The assimilation of the two sacred receptacles is reflected from the tenth century on in Catalonia and Castile, with the ark of Noah presenting the same features as the Ark of the Covenant depicted in the same manuscript. This is particularly evident in the Ripoll Bible, a giant Latin codex written and illuminated at the beginning of the eleventh century in the Catalan monastery of Ripoll during the abbacy of Oliba (1008–1046).²⁸ In the third register on fol. 6r of this richly illustrated book the ark is represented as a checkered gabled wooden box with a half-open door, perched on two high mountains. It appears as a conflating motif, used to illustrate different episodes of the Noah story—from God speaking to Noah to Noah and his sons working in the vineyard (Fig. 1).

The Noah's ark on fol. 6r is very similar to the Ark of the Covenant portrayed by another master on fol. 94v illustrating the Samuel cycle. It is shown twice, once in the second register, being stolen, and again in the fourth register, in the Temple of Dagon. The same features appear in a parallel illustration in the Roda Bible (vol. II, fol. 5r), likewise produced at Ripoll, a few years later.²⁹ In this sister Bible (I, fol. 9r) the ark is depicted twice in a strange composition in which a huge ark resting on two high mountains contains all the relevant episodes arranged around an identical but smaller ark, which also stands on two peaks. The spurious text of these Bibles includes the Vulgate and many Old Latin interpolations.³⁰ As in the Ripoll Bible, the ark appears as a conflating motif for the episodes depicted.³¹

²⁷ Hugh of St. Victor, *De archa Noe morali*, I, II (PL 176:621D–622A); Sicard (1993), 269–270.

²⁸ On this subject, see Contessa (2002). On the Catalan Bibles, see Neuss (1922), 58–59, 139–141; Mundó (2002).

²⁹ Neuss (1947–51), vol. I, 261–267; Klein (1972), 91–102; Klein (1993), 306–309. On the Roda Bible, see Avril, Aniel, Mentré, and Zaluska (1983), 31–43; Pijoán (1911–12), 475–507.

³⁰ On the text of the Catalan Bibles, see Contessa, “Le Bibbie dell’abate Oliba” (2003), 27–64.

³¹ On the dating and attribution of the two Catalan Bibles, see: Contessa (2005); Contessa (in prep.).

The details of Noah's ark are very similar in both Bibles, except for the position of the door and the presence of a row of windows in the Roda codex. A significant feature of the Ripoll Bible is that Noah's ark rests on feet, a peculiarity that makes it decidedly unfit for seafaring, and more like to a cupboard for storing books or scrolls, such as those represented in the *Codex Amiatinus* or the mosaics of the Galla Placidia mausoleum in Ravenna.³² In the Greek world such a bookcase would probably have been called a *kibotos*.³³

This form is very unusual in Western images of Noah's ark. Depictions of an ark standing on feet appear in Western art quite early, as in the Ashburnham Pentateuch.³⁴ But these images show a boxlike chest with a roof that opens up. However, as Elisheva Revel-Neher has pointed out, a gabled wooden box on feet, similar to the ark in the Ripoll Bible, is one of the most widespread shapes attributed to the Ark of the Covenant in early Jewish and medieval Christian art. In early Jewish representations the Ark appears as a box with a gabled or rounded pediment. The latter is generally associated with the Temple façade, as on the Bar Kochba coins (134–135), the third-century frescoes of Dura Europos, and many other images;³⁵ the gabled version is assimilated to the *aron ha-kodesh*, the cabinet in which the Torah scrolls have been kept in the synagogue since early times. This feature is attested in third- and fourth-century Jewish funerary art, such as gold-glasses, graffiti, and frescoes,³⁶ in synagogue reliefs, and in synagogue pavement mosaics from the fourth to the seventh century.³⁷

³² *Codex Amiatinus*, Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, cod. 1. Fol. 5r, seventh century; see Revel-Neher (1984), 195–218, figs. 88, 89.

³³ Revel-Neher (1984), 197–201.

³⁴ One of the oldest examples is the Ashburnham Pentateuch, whose origins and dating are still a matter of discussion, but here the ark has a strange form and a multicolor appearance. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. Nouv. acq. lat. 2334, fols. 9, 10v; Narkiss (1969), 49–60; Narkiss (1972), 19–38; Rickert (1986), 197–199; Hoogland-Verkerk, "Moral Structure in the Ashburnham Pentateuch," (1999), 71–87; Hoogland-Verkerk, "Biblical Manuscripts in Rome" (1999), 97–120. See also Hoogland-Verkerk (2004); Narkiss (2007), 341–346, pls. 17–18, figs. 19–21.

³⁵ Meshorer (1997), pl. 64, fig. 218; pl. 65, fig. 230, pl. 66, fig. 233; Meshorer (2000), 26, fig. 1; Weitzmann and Kessler (1990), fig. 193.

³⁶ On the catacombs of Monteverde and Villa Torlonia in Rome, see Revel-Neher (1984), 99–108; Revel-Neher, (1998), figs. 17–20. See the gold-glasses now in New York, Metropolitan Museum; Jerusalem, Israel Museum; and Berlin, Staatliche Museum; *ibid.*, 95–107, figs. 23–25.

³⁷ Revel-Neher (1984), 117, 120–131, figs. 51–54; Contessa, "Les mosaïques synagogales" (2003), 751–786.

The symbolic meaning attributed to the Sanctuary/Temple was transferred to the synagogue, the minor sanctuary that replaced the Temple as a place of communal prayer after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The synagogue's most sacred possession was the *aron ha-kodesh* in which the Torah scrolls were kept, as once the Tables of the Law, the jar of manna, and Aaron's rod were housed in the Ark of the Covenant in the Sanctuary. The depiction of the Ark of the Covenant with a double-panel open or closed door is thus a "visual interference" of the *aron ha-kodesh*, which the artist could see in the synagogue.³⁸ This particular feature of the Ark of the Covenant, abandoned by medieval Jewish artists, who preferred representations of the Tables of Law visualized inside a transparent Ark, was adopted in early Byzantine and Western art, as was shown by Revel-Neher.³⁹

The gabled boxlike Ark was probably well known in Spain from early times. It appears in several Spanish manuscripts, including the León Bible dated to 960 (León, Real Collegiata de San Isidoro, cod. 2; Fig. 2), a related copy executed in 1162 (León, Real Collegiata de San Isidoro, cod. 3), and a later Bible from San Millán de la Cogolla, now in the Library of the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid (cod. 2; Fig. 3).⁴⁰ As some scholars have suggested, these Bibles are probably based on early Visigothic manuscripts, and the text of the first Bibles preserves an ancient peninsular biblical tradition in the Old Latin marginal glosses placed next to the Vulgate text.⁴¹ The illuminations of the León Bibles are inserted in the text; their only full-page illustration is the frontispiece to Leviticus, which shows the Tabernacle (*tabernaculum testimonii*) enclosed by an arch and two supporting columns with billowing curtains gathered at the sides.

In the earliest León Bible (fol. 50r) the Sanctuary implements are shown in an order that appears to follow Exodus 35:12–16, rather than 25–27: the tent and its covering (*velum*), the table with staves and vessels, the candlestick (*candelabrum*), the Ark of the Covenant (*archa*), and the incense table, here as a "T"-shaped altar (*altare*). The illustra-

³⁸ Revel-Neher (1984), 38–40, 95; Revel-Neher (1982), 6–17.

³⁹ Revel-Neher (1984), 190–192, 149–154, 170–175; Revel-Neher (1998), 32–35, 39–42. On other figurations of the Ark of the Covenant in Christian art, such as those of Santa Maria Maggiore and Germigny-des-Prés, see Revel-Neher (1997–98), 55–66.

⁴⁰ Williams (1963), 72–78; Williams (1965), 66–85; Mentré (1996), figs. 89, 90; Williams (1999), 179–218; De Silva y Verástegui (1999), 159–165.

⁴¹ Williams (1999), 187–192. On the marginal glosses of the 960 Bible, see Fischer (1961), 5–47.

tion has some inconsistencies: the Sanctuary is given a masonry wall; all the implements share the same space within the Sanctuary, which has no internal divisions; there is no Menorah in the Sanctuary, but a tiny menorah-shaped candelabra stands on the incense table, as on a Christian altar; the laver and the altar of burnt offerings are not shown.⁴² A strange object is positioned before the Sanctuary. In the 1162 copy of the León Bible (fol. 50r) a small parallelepiped-shaped item appears outside the Sanctuary and the entrance is omitted. A comparison with the late-twelfth or early-thirteenth-century Bible of San Millán de la Cogolla, (fol. 58r), which seems to reflect a more exact version of the scene in a shared model, indicates that this strange object with knotted curtains and a central shaft is meant to represent the entrance to the Sanctuary.⁴³ This Bible also helps us to interpret the altar at the top left in all three León manuscripts as the shewbread table, since small round loaves appear on its surface, and the "T"-shaped altar as that of incense, as indicated by the smoke rising from it. In the Cogolla manuscript the laver and the altar of burnt offerings are on the right, near the vessels, and the curtains are correctly used to define the space of the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant stands alone.

John W. Williams, followed by Soledad De Silva y Verástegui, interpreted this scene as Moses consecrating Aaron and his sons (Lev. 8:10–15).⁴⁴ I think the scene may be related to the daily burning of incense referred to in Exodus 30:7, since Aaron is holding an item very similar to the *machtah*, the censer mentioned in Leviticus 16:12–13 and 24:7, which is depicted in late antique and medieval Jewish art as a small rectangular shovel (as in the mosaic floor at Hammat Tiberia, Bet-Shean, Sepphoris, and Bet-Alpha).⁴⁵ A similar shape figures in several Sephardic Bible illustrations, where it is associated with the shewbread table (Lev. 24:7).⁴⁶

In the León Bibles the Ark looks like a gabled coffer standing on four feet, all shown on the same frontal plane. Hooks for poles are probably

⁴² The label *labrum* may be associated with one of the vessels, which the illustrator interprets as the basin.

⁴³ The later dating is proposed by Williams (1965) and the earlier one by De Silva y Verástegui (1999).

⁴⁴ Williams (1963), 75; Williams (1965), 74; De Silva y Verástegui (1999), 162–165.

⁴⁵ Weiss (2005), 73, fig. 17.

⁴⁶ E.g. Bible in Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, cod. 2668, fol. 7v and the Perpignan Bible, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. Heb. 7, fol. 13r; Revel-Neher (1998) fig. 58, pl. 7b, where the shovels are clearly labeled *machtah*.

indicated in the middle; these are more clearly illustrated in the first León Bible, not only on fol. 50r, but also on fol. 123r, where Solomon's worship in the Temple is depicted (I Kings 8).⁴⁷ In all of the illustrations the building is seen from both without and within; each element is flattened and can be viewed separately and from different points of view. The only device that might give a two-dimensional view of the Ark is the blue color assigned to the central feet, those located at the back. All the other objects are seen in section.

The shape of the Ark of the Covenant in the León Bibles, carried on poles in the first one (fol. 90r; Joshua 3:17),⁴⁸ does not correspond to the biblical description, but is an iconographical motif well known in medieval Spain. The form belongs more to the symbolical than to the historical domain.

As we have seen, the same shape was attributed to Noah's ark in the Ripoll Bible and possibly also appears on the Bagües frescoes.⁴⁹ A similar shape is attributed to Noah's ark in the illustrated Beatus commentaries on the Apocalypse, made in Spain between the ninth and the twelfth century.⁵⁰ The features of Noah's ark and the Ark of the Covenant thus seem to have been interchangeable in medieval Spanish art. This works in both directions, as is borne out by the illustration in the Bible of San Millán de la Cogolla depicting Solomon's Temple (fol. 193v, Fig. 4), where the Ark of the Covenant has the same trapezoidal roof as Noah's ark in the same codex (fol. 14v, Fig. 5).⁵¹

⁴⁷ Williams (1963) 96–97.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 80–81.

⁴⁹ Al-Hamdani (1974), 170–194; Wettstein (1978), 97–108; Sureda (1995), 62–65, 156–159, 302–311.

⁵⁰ See the Valladolid Beatus (fol. 129v), or the Gerona Beatus (fol. 170); Williams (1994–1998); 2, figs. 190, 341; Urgell Beatus (fol. 82v), Facundus Beatus (fol. 184v), Saint-Sever Beatus (fol. 157v); *ibid.*, 3, figs. 50, 298, 431.

⁵¹ Cahn (1982), fig. 133. This shape is attested in the Roda Bible (fol. 9), in the twelfth century mosaics of San Marco in Venice, in the fourteenth century Padua Bible (Rovigo, Accademia dei Concordi, cod. 212, fol. 5v), and in several Catalan Hebrew Haggadah codices dated to the fourteenth century (such as the Golden Haggadah, London, British Library, cod. 27210, f. 52r, Barcelona, 1310–1320 and the Sarajevo Haggadah, Sarajevo, National Museum, *Haggadah*, fol. 5v); see Narkiss (1997), fig. 17; Roth (1963), 22, fig. 17; Contessa (2004), 257–270; Contessa (2007), 85–115.

Jewish Medieval Tradition

The shifting role of the gabled bookcase type of ark, resting on feet, was possibly also known outside the Christian context: it appears in fact in a later Hebrew manuscript, the so-called First Bible of Joshua Ibn Gaon, who wrote and illustrated it in Tudela (Navarre) in 1300 (Fig. 6).⁵² The marginal illustration on fol. 13r accompanies the text of Genesis 6:14, and shows a small gabled ark with a central opening and a decorated top. The two-dimensional ark stands on four feet, and images of birds and animals are distributed in three registers within the ark.⁵³ According to Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, the Noah illustration in the first Ibn Gaon Bible was possibly influenced by an iconography close to that of early Spanish manuscripts, such as the illustrated Beatus commentaries on the Apocalypse. In fact, these manuscripts show Noah's ark as a transparent flat box with a ridged roof, whose interior is divided into several registers containing various animals. The influence of such illustrations is evident in a later Jewish manuscript, a Franco-Spanish late-fifteenth-century small Bible at the Cambridge University Library.⁵⁴

However, unlike the Ibn Gaon illustration, the Beatus depictions of Noah's ark are without feet.⁵⁵ Like the ark in the Ripoll Bible, the Ibn Gaon image looks quite similar to ancient renderings of the *aron ha-brit* and/or *aron ha-kodesh*, with birds and animals in the place of sacred rolls and books. It seems to recall the ancient shared symbolism of the two receptacles—the Ark of the Covenant and the ark of Noah.

⁵² Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. héb. 20, fol. 13r; Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, and Tcherikover (1982), 1, 22–23; Sed-Rajna (1994), 15, 35–44; Sed-Rajna (1987), 21, fig. 12. For the state of the question on the work of Joshua Ibn Gaon and further bibliography, see Kogman-Appel (2004), 98–130. Kogman-Appel suggests that this was not the first Bible executed by Joshua Ibn Gaon.

⁵³ Oxford, Bodleian Library, cod. Kennicott 2, fols. 1v–2r, Soria, 1306; Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, and Tcherikover (1982), 1, 24–33; Kogman-Appel (2004), 100–114. The name of Joshua Ibn Gaon also appears in the colophon of an interesting plan of the Temple in the Second Kennicott Bible and in two other Bibles, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. héb. 21 and Dublin, Trinity College cod. 16. Sed-Rajna (1994), 16, 44; Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, and Tcherikover (1982), 1, 22–23, 30–33. Kogman-Appel (2004), 100–102, 111–114. Ibn Gaon possibly completed another manuscript, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. Add. 4° 75, *ibid.*, 1, 33–34.

⁵⁴ Cambridge University Library, cod. Add. 468, fol. 4v; on fol. 5v is depicted a dove. In the margins of fol. 4v a small gabled structure is shown, divided into square compartments, with a pennon painted in magenta and gold; on fol. 6, a rainbow illustrates Noah's covenant. Narkiss, Cohen-Mushlin, and Tcherikover (1982), 1, 50, 161–162.

⁵⁵ William (1994–98), 2, figs. 190, 341; *ibid.*, 3, figs. 50, 298, 431.

The assimilatory meaning of the two arks perhaps originated in the shifting use of the terms *tebah* and *aron* to designate the Ark in which the Torah scrolls were kept in the synagogue in early times. This tradition is attested to in the Mishnah, where the Ark of the Torah is called the *tebah*.⁵⁶

Except for Philo, the only Jewish source that clearly links the two arks is a late-mystic group of texts that were subsequently collected in the early modern period as the *Zohar*, the *Book of Splendor*. The core of this group was written in Castile in the late thirteenth century. Dealing with the generations of Noah, the *Zohar* declares that “Noah below embodied the covenant modeled on above,” while the ark is said: “Ark of the Covenant” since Noah with the ark below corresponded to a similar union above. With reference to the circumstance that Noah entered the ark only after the establishment of the covenant (Gen. 6:18), we read: “Then the ark became Ark of the Covenant, and the ark and Noah within it, together were a symbol of supernal pattern.”⁵⁷

We do not know if a similar tradition was known outside of Spain, or if the Spanish iconographic features of the ark of Noah influenced a thirteenth-century Pentateuch in Ashkenazi square script (Fig. 7), probably written and illustrated in France, and now in the Vatican Library.⁵⁸ As in many other Bibles from various cultural realms, in this manuscript the *masorah* is written in an elaborate micrography representing human and animal shapes or illustrating the adjacent text. This is the case for the Noah story, which is accompanied by a small cycle of images, including the ark and the dove (fol. 7r), followed by a rough portrait of the raven (fol. 8v) and a schematic version of the sacrifice of Noah (fol. 9r). The ark is shaped like a gabled oblong chest standing on feet, divided into horizontal compartments, and crowned

⁵⁶ *The Mishnah*, *Ta'anit* 2:1 and *Megillot* 3:1; Danby (1967), 195, 204.

⁵⁷ *The Zohar*, 1, Noah, 59b; Sperling and Simon (1956); *Le Zohar*, *Genèse*, I, 59b Mopsik (1981); *The Zohar*, I, 50b; Matt (2004). I thank Prof. Shlomo Naeh for checking the translation of the text suggested here.

⁵⁸ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Hebr. 14, fol. 9r. The manuscript was copied by Elia [Elijah] b. Berechiah ha-Nakdan for Asher and completed in 1239. I would like to thank Michal Sternthal and Kanon Estherlee of the Center for Jewish Art, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts section, for their help in finding pictures and data on this and other Hebrew manuscripts. I am grateful to Benjamin Richler for giving me the unpublished text from the new catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, which is in press. See also Assemani (1926), 14–15 and Cassuto (1956), 3–19. On the scribe and his father, see Golb (1985), 239–249, 340–343.

by a pearl-like decoration. Rain falls over the ark, while a dove carries a heart-shaped leaf in its beak. The inhabitants of the ark are shown in transparency inside, as in the Beatus illustrations.

It is difficult to say whether representations of the ark in the Ibn Gaon Bible and in the Ashkenazi Pentateuch were related to Christian images, or, more likely, were an independent expression of the Jewish illustrators based on Jewish sources.

A Comparative Plan

The most interesting Jewish illustration reflecting a link between the Sanctuary implements and the ark of Noah is a southern French manuscript dated 1366–1382, the Farhi Bible, now in the Sassoon Family Collection (n. 368).⁵⁹ On fol. 154r a full-page panel shows a schematic ground plan of the Tabernacle, labeled above “the shape of the Tabernacle,” and at the left a frontal section of Noah’s ark, with its own label, “the shape of the ark,” with measurements and internal partitions (Fig. 8). The inscriptions are written in gold on rectangular inserts. The high narrow ark is divided into three sections, terminating in a narrower part with a central circle called a *tsohar* and the inscription “and in a cubit you shall finish it.” Other labels give the ark’s width and height but not its length, while the inhabitants define the three storeys. The first is called “lower story” and labeled *behemot* (cattle); the second is *chaiot* (beasts); the last, called “third,” is labeled *ofot* (fowls). The first section on the right is inscribed *petach* (door-opening) and the third *chalon* (window).⁶⁰

The ground of the Sanctuary plan is divided into square checkered areas colored blue, red, orange, and green. The entrance is positioned eastward at the base of the plan and labeled, “east side, eastward.” The measurements of the court are given in cubits, according to Exodus 27:13. Partial and total measurements of the Tabernacle itself are in *krashim* (boards). Labels give the position of the objects in the respective sections: first the laver; then table, menorah, altar, and parochet”

⁵⁹ This manuscript was written by Elisha ben Abraham, known as Crescas in 1382. Sassoon (1932), I, 6–14; Narkiss (1974), 72; Kogman-Appel (2004), 151–154, 160, 163–164, 192.

⁶⁰ The illuminator seems to accept the presence of both a window and a precious stone. On *tsohar* and window see n. 1.

(the veil that closes the entrance to the Holy of Holies); and finally, in the last compartment, the Ark.

The purpose of this strange and unique plan seems to be to draw an analogy between certain characteristics of Noah's ark and the Sanctuary, mainly the subdivision into three sections and the exact measurements, which, in one case, the 50 cubits width of the ark and of the Sanctuary court, seem to coincide, although in the case of the ark the 30 cubits refers to the height and in the Sanctuary to the length. The ark was in fact three times bigger than the Sanctuary, its length being 300 cubits. The plan has some inconsistencies, not only in conception, but also in the rendering. The most evident is that the 50-cubit width of Noah's ark looks smaller than the corresponding measurement in the Sanctuary plan, while the 30-cubit height of the ark looks bigger than the equivalent in the Sanctuary.

This illustration is presumably related to the texts that immediately precede or follow it. The text on the next page is the *Ma'ase ha-Mishkan*, the making of the Tabernacle, also known as *Baraita de Meleket ha-Mishkan* (*Baraita on the Construction of the Tabernacle*), a text characterized by a concrete approach to the Tabernacle, which is seen as a physical reality. Only the first three chapters (of fourteen) are written out in the Sassoon manuscript.⁶¹ They deal with: (1) the dimensions of the Tabernacle, the configurations of the planks, bar, posts, tenons, sockets, and rings; (2) dimensions, arrangement, and attachment of the curtains; and (3) the goat's hair curtains and outer covers.⁶²

A further link may be seen between the illustration's ark and Tabernacle plans and the text that surrounds it on three sides. This text belongs to *Sefer ha-Shorashim* (Book of Roots), a Hebrew lexicon by R. David Kimhi, a medieval scholar whose writings on Hebrew lexicography and grammar became standard works in the Middle Ages. The *Sefer* is written in the margins of fols. 42r–165r and is accompanied by a delicate gold ornament at the corners of the page.⁶³ Kimhi

⁶¹ *Baraita* are any of the ancient oral traditions of Jewish religious law that were not included in the Mishnah.

⁶² See note and bibliography in the version edited by Kirschner, *Baraita de Meleket ha-Mishkan* (1992), 1–16, 225–228.

⁶³ *Sefer Ha-Shorashim* is a list of the radical letters into which Hebrew roots can be conveniently grouped. These root letters are arranged in lexicons according to the Hebrew alphabet, from *aleph* to *tav*. David Kimhi (1160–35), also known as the RaDak, was a medieval rabbi, biblical commentator, philosopher, and grammarian, born in

follows the Hebrew alphabetic order. The roots recorded on the pages around the illustration all begin with the letter *shin*, the last word on the page before the plan being *shakan*, the root of the word *Mishkan*, Tabernacle. This link suggests that the use of illustrations in this manuscript is highly sophisticated and that a careful study and analysis of the relation text-illustration-decoration of the Sassoon codex would be of much interest.

Shape and Meaning

The comparative plan of the Sassoon Bible, despite its singular insistence on layout and size, is influenced more by a symbolical than a physical or historical approach. In this Bible, the meaning of Noah's ark is called forth by a visual analogy with form and measurements of the Sanctuary. This similitude implies that the late-fourteenth-century illuminator was familiar with the connection between the sacred vessels. A similar connection between the Ark of the Covenant and the ark of Noah appears very early in the Septuagint, but it is seldom referred to in early and medieval Jewish sources. This link is preserved in the Old Latin translations from the Septuagint, which may have influenced the medieval Western visual tradition. In fact, literal aspects were determining factors in the definition of the form of the ark as well as its meaning.

It is of outstanding interest that artistic representations of the two arks as gabled wooden boxes on feet are to be found mainly in medieval Castile and Catalonia, where old biblical minority traditions were jealously preserved throughout the Middle Ages. It is worth remembering that the Vulgate text of the León Bibles as well as of the Catalanian Bibles present numerous glosses and interpolations from the Old Latin version. We cannot say with certainty when this rare iconographic motif originated. It was possibly connected with Old Latin illustrated Bibles, reflecting its characteristic approach to the ark of Noah: the ark is represented as the potential bearer of a deeper meaning that is evoked by its shape and measurements. The meaning of this shape is suggested by a visual comparison with another structure that has divinely ordered

Narbonne, Provence. His work focuses on the language, vocalization, grammar, and literal meaning of words.

measurements, the Ark of the Covenant, which, like Noah's ark, is a sacred receptacle linked to the presence of God and his Covenant, and has a salvific and cosmic function.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. The ark of Noah, Ripoll Bible, Ripoll Abbey, first half of the eleventh century. Vatican City, Vatican Library, cod. lat. 5729, fol. 6r.
- Fig. 2. The Wilderness Tabernacle, First Bible of León, Valeranica (Castile), 960. León, Real Collegiata de San Isidoro, cod. 2, fol. 50r.
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- Fig. 8. The form of the Sanctuary and of Noah's ark, Farhi Bible, Southern France (?) 1366–1382. Sassoon Family Collection (n. 368), fol. 154r.

PURITY AND IMPURITY
THE NAKED WOMAN BATHING IN JEWISH
AND CHRISTIAN ART

Sarit Shalev-Eyni

The image of the nude woman in water in medieval Jewish and Christian art is related to contemporary perceptions of immersion. Belief in the purifying and healing effects of water, going back to the biblical period, was adopted by Jews and Christians alike in creating certain basic rituals. For Jews immersion was the final stage of the purification process demanded of women completing their menstrual period. For Christians, it was associated with the sacrament of baptism, signifying admission to the Christian faith. Both of these notions figured in the development of the medieval image of the naked woman bathing. Together with the sanctified aspect, the connection between feminine nudity and water, especially in visual representations, contains elements of temptation. This aspect is especially dominant in the design of the image on secular luxury objects, but it is also recognizable in biblical iconography, as in the narrative of Bathsheba and David. This chapter considers facets of that image. It discusses the similarities and differences between representations in the Jewish and Christian contexts and, through its various expressions, considers the similarities and dissimilarities between the Jewish and Christian attitudes toward menstruation, purification, and sexual relations within marriage.

Menstruation, Purification, and Baptism

The medieval Ashkenazi sages laid special importance on the purification process imposed on women after the days of menstruation.¹ According to Jewish law, to complete her menstrual period (five days at least), a woman must count seven “clean days.” During the whole time (at least twelve days altogether) she is called *niddah* (literally, excommunicated),

¹ Dinary (1979–80), 302–324; Ta-Shma (1993), 163–170.

a state indicating her impurity. At the termination of the *niddah* period she is ready for the final act of purification, the ritual immersion in water. Fixed rules defined the suitable sources of water for immersion: a spring or rain and groundwater gathered directly. Immersion in a regular domestic bath was not permitted, since it involved water collected through human artifice. Special bathhouses—*miqva'ot* (singular *miqveh*)—were usually constructed. A deep shaft was dug to reach the groundwater, which was collected in a pool built in a way that allowed the water to be replaced regularly. A staircase enabled women to descend into the bathing chamber. Such bathhouses, usually situated not far from a synagogue, were excavated in several German towns, including Speyer (1128),² Worms (1186), and Bamberg (fifteenth century). Some of them, like the *miqveh* in Speyer, which is close in architectural design to the contemporary renovations carried out in the local Cathedral, were decorated in a way that stressed their exalted religious status.³

A woman bathing in a *miqveh* is depicted in the Ashkenazi Hamburg Miscellany, a collection of ritual texts with a calendar attached that was produced around 1427 in the middle Rhine region (Fig. 1).⁴ In the lower part of the illustration, a naked woman is bending down in the water. Above, lying in bed, is her waiting husband. Unclothed and partly covered by a blanket, he is holding a lighted candle. The illustration appears along the margin of the *piyyut* (liturgical poem), “I will give thanks to you for though you were angry with me, your anger is turned away” (אֹדֶךָ כִּי אָנַפְתָּ בִּי וְתִשָּׁב), written in Provence by the eleventh-century poet Joseph ben Solomon of Carcassonne.⁵ In succeeding centuries this *piyyut* became an integral part of the Ashkenazi rite, as is attested by its perpetual inclusion in Ashkenazi prayer books copied between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century.

Recited on the Sabbath of Hanukkah, the feast celebrating the Maccabees’ victory over the Hellenistic rulers, the *piyyut* tells of the serious troubles brought upon the people of Israel by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Most of the tyrannical decrees recounted in the poem refer to ancient

² Stein (1981), 55–63; Stein (1996).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Hamburg, Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Heb. 37, fol. 79v. The manuscript includes prayers recited in the synagogue for the whole year, *haftarot*, the Haggadah, laments, prayers for ritual ceremonies, and a calendar. For the Hamburg Miscellany, see Narkiss (1969), 118, pl. 39; Gutmann (1978), pl. 31.

⁵ Davidson (1970), I, 76, No. 1651; Weinberger (1997), 170–172.

sources such as the books of II Maccabees⁶ and Judith or the *Scholion*, the commentary to the short *Megilat Ta'anit* written in the Tanaite period.⁷ The decrees included the ban on ritual circumcision, the command to eat meat that had been sacrificed to idols, and the *ius primae noctis*, according to which each virgin bride had to lie with the Greek governor before her first intercourse with her groom.⁸

In addition to the decrees listed in the older versions, our poet added another central one that is found only in medieval sources. According to this tradition, Antiochus forbade the women of Israel to immerse themselves in the *miqveh*. Since immersion in the ritual bath was considered a crucial act, without which a woman could not accomplish her purification, men had no choice but to renounce sexual relations with their wives. As a reward for their devotion, the Lord performed a miracle, and each couple found a natural spring under their own home (as in the midrashic version)⁹ or a private built-in *miqveh*, as in the poem:

The purity of ritual immersions he [Antiochus] prevented.
Sacred men became weary of being parted from their wives.
You [the Lord] took care to multiply the miracle.
You made for each of them a ritual bath.¹⁰

The motif of immersion figures again in the last part of the *piyyut*, which recounts how the people of Israel were finally redeemed by a woman, Judith, who in the medieval tradition was relocated to the Maccabean epoch and associated with the rebellion against Antiochus.¹¹ Attracted by Judith's beauty and wanting to win her love, the Greek governor is ready to do whatever she asks. Her only request is that she be allowed

⁶ See chapters 6 and 7.

⁷ *Scholion* for the nineteenth of the month of Elul; see Noam (2003), 90–92, 396–397. A later source that is reflected in the decrees as they appear in the *piyyut* is the tenth-century pseudoepigraphic work of Yosifun (Josippon). See *Sefer Josippon* (1978), 66–75 (Hebrew).

⁸ On the origin of this motif, see Boureau (1998).

⁹ See *Midrash Hanukah*, Munich version; Jellinek (1938), VI, 2.

¹⁰ My translation. For the Hebrew text of the *piyyut*, see Baer (1868), 629–633. For the ban on immersion, but without the miracle, see also the eighth-century *She'iltot de Rab Ahai Gaon* (1961), 1/2, 187, and the eleventh-century *piyyut* “*Odekha ki 'anitani*,” written by Menahem ben Makbir of Regensburg. For the text see Baer (1868), 636–637.

¹¹ On the transformation of the apocryphal tale of Judith and Holofernes and its transfer to the Maccabees, see Weinberger (1997), 170–171; Friedman (1987), 225–246.

to immerse herself in a spring before she lies with him.¹² Despite the ban on ritual immersion, the governor agrees. A few hours later, alone in the tent, when they are about to have intercourse, she cuts off his head, thus avenging the humiliated dignity of the daughters of Israel and bringing victory to her people.¹³

The centrality of the motif of ritual immersion in the eleventh-century *piyyut* exemplifies the special emphasis placed on the observance of the *niddah* laws in medieval Jewish society.¹⁴ As early as in the Mishnah, the precept of immersion is defined as one of the three crucial commandments laid on women, which, if not correctly observed, may cause death in childbirth: “For three transgressions do women die in childbirth: for heedlessness of the laws of menstruation, the dough-offering (*ḥallah*),¹⁵ and the lighting of the [Sabbath] lamp.”¹⁶ These three precepts, represented by three feminine figures, are depicted on a small Italian marriage casket from the fifteenth century (Fig. 2).¹⁷ The woman on the right is kneading a loaf of bread from a batch of dough. On the left, another woman lights the Sabbath candle in a typical hanging lamp, the Ashkenazi *Judenstern*. A third figure is depicted in the center, standing naked in a tub, symbolizing her purification in the *miqveh*. Each of the three is accompanied by a band with the special blessing designated for the rite being performed.

The importance of these three precepts is related to the rabbinic attitude that considered them as atonement for the Original Sin:

And why was the precept of menstruation given to her? Because she shed the blood of Adam... And why was the precept of dough given to her? Because she corrupted Adam, who was the dough (*ḥallah*) of the world... And why was the precept of the Sabbath lights given to her? Because she extinguished the soul of Adam...¹⁸

¹² Compare another version of *Midrash Hanukah* published by Jellinek (1938), I, 34. For the source of the motif in the book of Judith, see 12:7. There the purpose of the immersion is not clear.

¹³ For the Hebrew text, see Baer (1868), 632.

¹⁴ For the centrality of the *Niddah* laws in the Middle Ages, cf. Cohen (1999), 82–100, esp. 84–87.

¹⁵ Numbers 15:20.

¹⁶ Sabbath 2:6; English translation after Danby, *The Mishnah* (1950), 102.

¹⁷ Narkiss (1958), 288–295; *Gardens and Ghettos* (1989), No. 236; see also Horowitz (1988), 34.

¹⁸ *Genesis Rabbah* XVII. 8; *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis* (1983), I, 139.

According to the midrash, the blood of menstruation was related to the blood shed by Adam, the fault of Eve and her feminine descendants: “She shall observe her menstrual period to atone for the blood that she shed” (Midrash Tanḥuma, *Metsorá*, 5.1).¹⁹ Children born to women who disobeyed the rules of *niddah* are specifically called *Sons of Niddah*, a term indicating their impurity.²⁰ These, as a punishment, may be afflicted with leprosy.²¹

Christian theologians and physicians in the Middle Ages also tended to think of menstrual blood as a pathogenic and poisonous substance, and, as in the Jewish tradition, claimed that conceiving during the menstrual cycle would result in offspring tainted with leprosy.²² The strict Jewish attitude toward menstruation was known to some Christian writers and several of them, such as Peter of Poitiers (d. 1205) in his *Summa de Confessione*, even pointed out the advantage of the Jewish practice by saying that the reason Jewish men rarely suffered from leprosy is their regular separation from their menstruating wives.²³ Christians, however, paid much less attention to menstruation. Whereas Jewish law extended the period of impurity to include the seven “clean days” and regarded ritual immersion as the termination of the status of *niddah*, for Christians the cessation of blood was enough. In fact, in Christianity menstruation was not related to any ritual act. Although Christians defined menstruation as one of the consequences of the Fall, they did not stress its punitive status requiring regular performance of atonement, as was current among Jews.²⁴ Thus from the Christian theological point of view, the idea of regular female purification to compensate for Original Sin was not relevant.

Moreover, these fundamental dissimilarities expose differing perceptions not only of menstruation, but also of sexual relations. The strict Jewish rules of menstrual purification endow sexual relations within marriage with an aspect of sanctity that contrasts with the Christian sanctification of the ascetic life. In the eighth century Christians elevated the state of marriage and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries redefined

¹⁹ *Midrash Tanḥuma*, II, 274.

²⁰ For sources dealing with the status of the *Sons of Niddah*, see Marienberg (2003), 159–204.

²¹ *Leviticus Rabbah* 15, 5; *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus* (1939), 193.

²² Resnick (1998), 4–7. Resnick (2000), 241–263.

²³ Resnick (1988), 8, n. 26.

²⁴ See Marienberg (2003), 43–49.

it as a sacrament,²⁵ but it was still regarded as a preferable choice only for those who did not adhere to the ideal of monasticism. A married woman having sex was still a reflection of the sinful Eve, in contrast to the nun, the Bride of Christ, who symbolized the Virgin Mary.²⁶ Contrary to this view, for Jews marriage with sexual relations between husband and wife was regarded as the most desirable state as long as the couple strictly observed the rules of *niddah*. Children born to women who did not observe these rules, *Sons of Niddah*, were excluded from the sanctified circle of the practicing community.²⁷ For Jews, this attitude was crucial not only within their own society. It enabled them to define themselves in relation to the Christian environment. As Christians did not observe the rules of *niddah*, they were all categorized as belonging to the impure group of *Sons of Niddah*, a term that was also used in polemical literature.²⁸

Elisheva Baumgarten argues that since the twelfth century Jewish polemicists posited the observance of *niddah* as the ritual by which women are accepted into the Jewish faith, a parallel to the rite of male circumcision. This view reflected contemporary Jewish unease with the traditional Christian comparison between the Jewish and Christian rites for admitting newborn infants into their faiths. The Christian claim is defined in the Jewish polemical work *Sefer Nizzahon Vetus* (ca. 1300):²⁹ “The heretics ask: We baptize both males and females and in that way we accept our faith, but in your case only men and not women can be circumcised.” The Jewish polemicist responds by saying that: “[Jewish] women are accepted because they watch themselves and carefully observe the prohibitions connected with menstrual blood.”³⁰

The polemicists rejected baptism and stressed immersion as a substitute reserved for women, but which in fact affected all offspring, male and female, since only those born to women who observed the rules of *niddah* could be part of the sanctified circle. The concept of

²⁵ Shahar (2003), 65–72, and below.

²⁶ Ibid., 23–27.

²⁷ See above n. 20.

²⁸ See the medieval polemical treatise *Sefer Joseph Hamekane* (1970), 95; Berger (1979), 224–225; see also Berger (2000), 76; Baumgarten (2005), 326. In Jewish literature, the status *Son of Niddah* was also reserved for Christ. See *Sefer Tam u-Mu'ad*; Shinan (1999), 90. This enabled Jews to refute the sacredness of the Son and offer an opposing interpretation of his mother's virginity, which served as a model for feminine asceticism.

²⁹ Baumgarten (2005), 323–327.

³⁰ Berger (1979), 224.

the *niddah* immersion as an antimodel for baptism in the polemical literature illustrates a certain similarity between the practices: the two rituals share a belief in the purifying and redeeming qualities of water. The notion of endowing ritual water with the spiritual power to erase the stain of Original Sin on the soul is found in the Christian theology of baptism, though, unlike the Jewish view, it was not associated with Eve's transgression but with that of the whole human race.³¹

The belief in the spiritual power of water, shared by Christians and Jews, may explain why for Jews the idea of immersion also stretched to Christian ritual water, which, they thought, could actually give rise to impurity. Jews feared the effect of baptism, which they saw as a real threat—an act that could defile and convert them to Christianity.³² During the Crusades of 1096, attacks against Jews were accompanied by forced baptisms, and many Jews killed themselves and their children rather than allow themselves to be converted to Christianity.³³ Especially relevant to our context are events associated with women. A chronicle written in 1140 tells of two women surrounded by a group of Christians who intended to “pollute them with their malicious water.” They refused and died for his Name.³⁴ Two other women mentioned in the same chronicle “consented to wash themselves in the malodorous water” of baptism. They “were brought before the courtyard of idol worship,” but, unwilling to enter a church and be baptized at the font, “they stopped their feet at the threshold.” Their Christian foes then “leapt at them and beat them to death with hatchets and blows.”³⁵ In this last case, the source of pollution is defined as the baptismal font in the church. However, Israel Yuval contends that in the chronicles describing the events of 1096 the main arena for acts of martyrdom was the river, which was considered a potential baptismal font by both Christians and Jews.³⁶ The same river might have served in ordinary times as a proper source for the monthly immersion of Jewish women. In some instances, these opposing conceptions of the public water source led the rabbis to instruct women to avoid using the local river for immersion.³⁷ Fear of the contagious effect of the river water used by Christians could be one

³¹ Cramer (1993), 113–124, 130–137; see also below.

³² See Yuval (2006), 174–181.

³³ See Cohen (2004), 5–6 and 64–69.

³⁴ Heberman (1946), 38.

³⁵ Ibid., 39.

³⁶ Yuval (2006), 175.

³⁷ For such an incident see *ibid.*, 175, n. 85.

of the reasons for the construction of *miqva'ot* even in cities that were near rivers. These structures, usually situated next to the synagogue,³⁸ could be protected from Christian pollution and represented a proper response to the baptismal font in the church.

Between Purification and Temptation: The Case of Bathsheba

Although in the late Middle Ages, some Jews and other minority people were converted to Christianity, the baptism of adults was quite rare. Thus, for medieval Christian audiences, the image of a naked woman in water was not necessarily associated with the sacrament of baptism. On the other hand, secular bathhouses for adults, both men and women, flourished in the cities and were very popular. These, not connected in any way with ritual immersion, were often condemned by the church authorities as sources of lust and sexual promiscuity.³⁹ Visual evidence of the uses of bathhouses is found in the illuminated French medical treatise *Li Livres dou santé*, by Aldobrandino de Sienna, an Italian who worked in France, possibly at the royal court. In a late-thirteenth century copy, at the beginning of the chapter on bathing a man and a woman, in separate wooden tubs, illustrate the recommendation to bathe in cold, soft water for a only short while (Fig. 3).⁴⁰ However, they seem to be too busy looking at each other to be in a hurry to get out of the bath as Aldobrandino recommends. The man is staring intently at the bare breasts of the woman; her hand is raised in a responsive gesture.⁴¹ In a Christian context, a naked woman immersed in water could thus be an image of temptation.⁴²

A naked woman bathing as a figure of temptation is the focus of the story of David's sin (II Sam. 11). The Bible tells how one evening while the king was strolling on the roof of his house, he saw Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, washing herself. Attracted by the beautiful nude bather, he inquired as to who she was and sent messengers to bring her to him. Although he knew that she was married, the king could not

³⁸ See above.

³⁹ Shahar (2003), 213–214.

⁴⁰ London, British Library, Sloane MS. 2435, fol. 8v.

⁴¹ Jones (1998), 103–104.

⁴² On the image of a naked bathing woman on luxury objects, see Camille (1998), 81–87 and pls. 67–72.

overcome his desire, "...and he lay with her, for she was purified from her uncleanness" (11:4). The woman conceived and sent a message to the palace. The king, Having been successful in covering up the untoward pregnancy by sending Uriah to his wife, ordered Joab place Uriah, "in the forefront of the hottest battle" to meet his death (11:15). David was severely reprimanded by the prophet Nathan and repented (12:1–13). Bathsheba gave birth, but seven days later the child, the fruit of sinful intercourse, died (12:18).

Bathing in the nude (Sam. 11:2), the starting point of the story, can be regarded as a temptation scene: the sight of the beautiful naked woman arouses David's desire and leads to his sinning. This was the point of view of the illuminator of the St. Louis Psalter, executed in Paris around the middle of the thirteenth century (Fig. 4).⁴³ Here in the upper part of the initial *B(eatus vir)* of the Book of Psalms, David's head shown emerging through his palace window, gazing down at Bathsheba. Seated naked beside a spring, raising her hand to her breast, she is attended by her handmaiden, who kneels to wash her. Another handmaiden stands behind them, holding a towel. Michael Camille showed that this scene of temptation represents the "ungodly" mentioned in the first psalm. The contrasting image of the *beatus vir*, the protagonist of the psalm, is depicted in the lower part of the initial. Here, David is kneeling in repentance on a rock, gazing, this time upward, at the image of God depicted as Christ within a *mandorla*. The upward and downward gazes offer two options to the reader: divine love for the eternal God or carnal desire symbolized by the nudity of the bathing Bathsheba.⁴⁴

A less unequivocal attitude toward Bathsheba and her bathing is demonstrated in the contemporary Morgan Picture Bible (Fig. 5).⁴⁵ As in the St. Louis Psalter, David again appears at an upper palace window in the top-left section of the miniature, pointing to the building opposite. There the bathing Bathsheba stands in a tub, exposing the upper part of her body. She leans her head on her shoulder and raises one hand toward her breast. Her handmaiden stands next to her, holding what looks like a kettle. The messenger sent by David is coming out

⁴³ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 10525, fol. 85v. For a general survey of the iconography of Bathsheba bathing, see Kunoth-Leifels (1962). For the theme in middle Byzantine illuminated manuscripts see Meyer (2001), 105–110.

⁴⁴ Camille (1989), 303; For another interpretation, see Stahl (2004).

⁴⁵ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M. 638, fol. 41v. On the Morgan Picture Bible see *The Book of Kings* (2002), and further bibliography there.

of the palace door. He moves toward Bathsheba's house, pointing up at the bathing woman, while looking back at the king. The lower part of the miniature illustrates the rest of the story. On the left, David and Bathsheba are shown naked in bed. On the right, the king orders Joab to send Uriah to the battlefield.

Madeline Harrison Caviness pointed out that baring the breast is an image that connotes sexual arousal. In the bathing episode, Bathsheba's breasts are framed by the curves of her bent arm and the rim of the tub; in the bedroom scene David is touching one breast, while the other is surrounded by the curve of his hand holding her shoulder. Male sexuality is evoked in the miniature by David's pointing finger in the upper scene, by the messenger's rod held diagonally toward Bathsheba, and possibly also by the tall candle at the back (Fig. 6).⁴⁶ However, in visual representations such a large candle with its typical tripod base usually indicates a liturgical candle standing on or near a church altar. It can also be found near the bed of the Virgin and Child as in an illustration for the Christmas service celebrating the Nativity, the incarnation of the Lord, on a single leaf of an antiphonary (Fig. 7).⁴⁷ Here, in the initial of the responsory "*H (odie nobis caelorum)*" the Virgin Mary is shown lying in bed, holding the newborn Christ, who is suckling at her bare breast. The liturgical candle standing next to the bed in a place usually reserved in Nativity iconography for the manger relocates the narrative scene to the liturgical program of the church. It connects the birth of Christ with his sacrifice, celebrated daily in the Mass, and defines the Virgin as Mary-Ecclesia, the mother embodied in the church.⁴⁸

A similar ecclesiastical meaning can be discerned in the Morgan miniature (Fig. 6), where the placing of the candle behind the bed draws a parallel between Bathsheba and Ecclesia. This typological interpretation is based on the writings of the Church Fathers known in the Latin West, such as Origen (c. 182–c. 251), who identified Bathsheba as the *congregatio nationum*, allegorized Bathsheba's nudity as that of a pure intention, and turned David's illicit desire into the opposite state of a sanctified union.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Caviness (2001), 98.

⁴⁷ Swarzenski and Schilling (1929), pl. xvii.

⁴⁸ Such a large candle may also be related to the paschal candle and may thus connect the feasts of the Nativity and Easter; the birth of Christ and his death.

⁴⁹ Ambroise de Milan, *Apologie de David* (1977), 90; see also below.

The dual meaning of the naked body is also seen in the image of the bathing Bathsheba in the upper part of the Morgan miniature. Bathing in the nude carries the implication of sexual desire. Nevertheless, as I shall show, the manner of its depiction in the Morgan miniature also alludes to the opposite, sanctified, meaning. Unlike the image in the Paris Psalter (Fig. 4), the Morgan Bathsheba is not seated beside a spring, but stands in a tub, exposing only her upper body. She is accompanied by her handmaiden, who holds a vessel with a handle, ready to pour water over her mistress. Similar gestures and compositions including a tub, half-naked bodies, and a priest pouring water over the figures or anointing them with oil are typical of the images of baptism, as, for example, in the Bible Moralisée, where the good Christians “drink the water of baptism.”⁵⁰

The same pattern is also used in the Bible Moralisée (Fig. 8, upper-left medallion).⁵¹ Bathsheba is shown in a tub in a similar posture; David stands in the doorway, as if in the role of the baptizer. In the Bible Moralisée, the visual association with baptismal iconography is ensured by the parallel medallion and text (Fig. 8, lower-left medallion), where the bathing Bathsheba is identified with Ecclesia and the watching David with Christ:

That David saw Bathsheba who was bathing and washing and loved her signifies that Jesus Christ saw the Holy Church as she washed and cleaned herself of all filth and saw her beauty and purity, and He loved her and held her dear.⁵²

The idea of baptism in this context was expressed by Origen:

...her nudity, that of a pure heart, and her simplicity without veil, thanks to the sacrament of the bath...were to allure the heart [of the] true David.⁵³

This interpretation not only neutralizes the sinful, negative aspect of the event but also turns it around and presents the bathing as a sanctified

⁵⁰ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, fol. 26r, second medallion on the right. Here the baptism appears as an interpretation of Exodus 32:20. See Guest (1995), 83.

⁵¹ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, fol. 45r, third medallion on the left, *ibid.*, 123.

⁵² Lower-left medallion, *ibid.* In the image the “filth” mentioned in the textual explanation is represented in the form of two Jews who are falling down behind Ecclesia’s seat.

⁵³ *Ambroise de Milan, Apologie de David* (1977), 90.

act. In the Bible Moralisée this notion is further stressed in the next medallion (Fig. 8, upper-right medallion). Here in an image next to the one of David and Bathsheba sitting together and kissing, Bathsheba appears in the form of Mary nursing her newborn infant. The fact that Bathsheba's infant died a week later is ignored, and according to the explanatory image and text, he even symbolizes the "many children" that Jesus Christ has by the Holy Church (Fig. 8, lower-right medallion).⁵⁴

The tendency to minimize David's sin is also found in Jewish sources. One expression of this attitude is the interpretation of the bathing of Bathsheba as an act of ritual immersion. The source of this idea is in the biblical text that tells that David "lay with her, for she was purified from her uncleanness..." (Sam. 11:4). Jewish exegetes who tended to palliate David's transgression saw in this verse an indication that David did not lie with Bathsheba while she was in the state of *niddah*. The purification indicated in the verse was associated with the preceding bathing scene, interpreted as Bathsheba's immersion after the seven "clean days." David Kimhi (Provence, 1160–1235), for example, says about this verse: "for she was purified...—to inform that he [David] did not lie with her while she was *niddah*,... that she already was purified as it is said *washing herself* and he [Scripture] notifies that this bathing was to sanctify [herself] from the *niddah*."⁵⁵ A more general statement with the same intention was made by Rashi (Rabbi Shelomo ben Isaac, 1040–1105) in his commentary to the Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 107a): "this time [when he lies with her] her impurity was stopped and he did not lie with her while she was *niddah*."

The interpretation of Rashi, whose commentary was known among Christian theologians in Paris,⁵⁶ possibly influenced Peter Comestor, chancellor of the cathedral school of Notre Dame in Paris in regard to his remarks on the verse in his *Scholastic History* written around 1170: "Some report (*tradunt*) that she was having her period then and that the menstruation stopped at the touch of the king."⁵⁷ Like Rashi, Comestor claims that the purification mentioned in the text is related to menstruation. But whereas for Rashi this means that intercourse took

⁵⁴ Cod. 2554, fol. 26r, second medallion on the right. See Guest (1995), 83.

⁵⁵ *Mikra'ot Gedolot 'Haketer* (1993), 197.

⁵⁶ For Christian familiarity with Rashi from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, see, e.g., Hailperin (1963), 103ff; Dahan (1992), 321–336.

⁵⁷ Buc (1993), 108. On the motif of the sanctification through the touch of the king and its implications in the case of the French kings, see *ibid*.

place after the “seven clean days” and the immersion following them, for Comestor the stopping of menstruation was sufficient. According to this Christian view, the bathing scene had nothing to do with the menstruation of Bathsheba. It does however symbolize the one-time immersion of baptism associated with her typological identification as Ecclesia.

The same differences and similarities between the Jewish and Christian attitudes toward menstruation and immersion are evoked by comparing the Morgan miniature (Fig. 5) with the illustration in the Hamburg Miscellany (Fig. 1). The bathing of Bathsheba in the form of baptism in the upper part of the Morgan leaf may be paralleled with the immersion of the woman in the *miqveh* in the lower part of the Hamburg manuscript; the intercourse of the naked David and Bathsheba in the Morgan recalls the husband waiting in bed in the Hebrew illumination. The liturgical candle in the Morgan recurs in the form of a small candle held by the husband in the Hamburg volume. There the candle, which possibly alludes to the male sexuality of the holder, may also have the practical intention of showing the way to the wife returning from the *miqveh* or lighting up the act of immersion to ensure that it was preformed properly as required by Jewish law. Another possible meaning may be related to the symbolic candle of Adam’s soul that Eve’s sin extinguished, which is revived by the three precepts of *niddah*, *hallah*, and the Sabbath candle.⁵⁸ In both the Morgan and the Hamburg depictions the sexual desire conveyed by the naked bodies is combined with the sanctified idea of immersion. Yet, against the one-time act of baptism of the typological figure of Bathsheba-Ecclesia in the Christian example, the Jewish context transmits the unending cyclic procession of immersions in the *miqveh* of the ordinary mortal Jewish woman.

Leprosy and the Curative Quality of Immersion

The belief in the power of water to cure the soul of the believer is present in both baptism and the immersion of *niddah*. Both rituals also regarded leprosy as a condition that could be reversed by sanctified water. In the context of *niddah*, leprosy is a reaction to sin, a curse on the children of women who do not observe the rules of purification and do not

⁵⁸ See above.

immerse themselves properly in the *miqveh*: "...who causes a newborn child to be leprous? Its mother who did not observe her *niddah*."⁵⁹ In the sources on baptism, the concept of immersion appears as a cure for leprosy, which is interpreted as a spiritual condition of the sinful soul. Medical terminology with reference to baptism was employed by the Church Fathers, who described the state of humanity since the Fall as sick and wounded.⁶⁰ Christ was regarded as *Christus-Medicus*, the true physician,⁶¹ whereas the church was ascribed the role of hospital and baptism that of remedy.⁶² To describe the malady of humankind, the Church Fathers called on leprosy, which in the Bible was often represented as a medical expression of spiritual corruption, a punishment for those who did not accept subordination to men chosen by the Lord, or even to the Lord himself.⁶³

The association between leprosy and water based on the "law of the leper" in Leviticus (14:1, 8–9) is exemplified in the figure of Naaman, "captain of the host of the king of Syria," who suffered from leprosy. In search of relief, Naaman appealed to Elisha, who sent him a messenger, telling him to immerse himself seven times in the Jordan and promising that his flesh "shall come again" and he would be "clean" (2 Kgs. 5:10).⁶⁴ Persuaded by his servants to heed the prophet's words, Naaman dipped in the Jordan and was cured. Then, "he returned to the man of God...and he said, 'Behold, now I know that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel...'" (5:15). The conflation of the concepts of leprosy, immersion, and recognition of God exemplified in the narrative of Naaman was considered in Christian typology as a prototype of the sacrament of baptism. Ambrose (c. 339–397) says in his homilies on the Gospel of St. Luke:

The people... which had been leprous before the baptism in the mystical stream...are free from taints in soul and body after the sacrament of baptism...The coming salvation was proclaimed to the peoples in the figure of Naaman...For why was Naaman ordered to immerse himself a

⁵⁹ *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus* (1983), 193.

⁶⁰ Lukken (1973), 295.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 299–30.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 232.

⁶³ See Zakovitch (1985), 23–24, 142–145.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, 57.

certain number of times according to a mystical figure? Why was precisely the Jordan chosen? ... Recognize then the saving grace of baptism.⁶⁵

A similar attitude to leprosy and immersion influenced the rabbinic interpretation of the narrative of Pharaoh's daughter finding the baby Moses and its perception in the Middle Ages. The Bible tells how:

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her *amah* to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said *this is one of the Hebrews' children*. (Ex. 2:5–6)

At the same moment, Moses' sister Miriam, who "stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him" (Ex. 2:4) appears and suggests that the princess call for a Hebrew woman to nurse the child. The princess agrees and Miriam calls Moses' mother who receives the baby for nursing. When the child was weaned he was brought to Pharaoh's daughter, "...and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: And she said, *Because I drew him out of the water*" (2:7–10). Pharaoh's daughter thus rescued Moses, who, as a newborn Hebrew baby, had been condemned to death by her father (1:22).

The Bible ascribes the rescue of Moses to Pharaoh's daughter, but the identity of the woman who actually drew the ark-out of the Nile is ambiguous. The Bible tells that when the princess notices the floating basket, she sends her *amah* to take it (Ex. 2:5). The word *amah* in Hebrew has two different meanings. One is maiden (*amah*), and the other is hand (*ammah*). If we translate *amah* as maiden, it would mean that the princess sent one of her handmaidens to fetch the basket. But if we translate *amah* as hand it would mean that Pharaoh's daughter drew the basket out with her own hand. The two possibilities are noted in the Babylonian Talmud and the midrash: "R. Judah and R. Nehemiah: one said that the word means *her hand* and the other said that it means *her handmaid*."⁶⁶ While biblical commentators and exegetes could include both options, translators had to choose between the two. Thus, the Aramaic translations used by Jews show the meaning as *hand*, whereas in the Greek Septuagint, later adopted by the Eastern Church, and the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome, the accepted version in the West,

⁶⁵ Ambrosius, *Exp. Ev. Luc.*, 4, 50–51; *Corpus Christianorum* (1953), 124. English translation after Lukken (1973), 326.

⁶⁶ *Sotah* 12b, Babylonian Talmud, (1935–48), *Sotah*, 62; *Exodus Rabbah* I, 27.

the translation is *maiden*, meaning that the princess sent one of her servants (*misit unam e famulis suis*) to fetch the basket.

Translating *amah* as hand, stressing the point that the princess herself, and not a servant, performed the act of rescue, fits the positive Jewish attitude toward the princess. In various Hebrew sources, Pharaoh's daughter is called *Bithiah* (after I Chron. 3:11), meaning the daughter of the Lord. These sources explain how she received this name indicating her special status: "R. Joshua of Siknin said in the name of R. Levi: 'The Holy One, blessed be He said to Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh: Moses was not your son yet you called him your son; you too, though you are not my daughter yet I will call you my daughter.'"⁶⁷ The midrash further explains that, "Ten names were applied to Moses... Said the Holy One, blessed be He to Moses: 'As you live, out of all names applied to you, I shall call you by just that name which Bithiah, the daughter of Pharaoh, has called you': even as she called his name Moses (Ex. 2:10)."⁶⁸

The same sources also saw in her bathing in the water and touching the basket elements of cure and immersion. According to Exodus Rabbah (1, 23) the princess went down to bathe in the Nile in order to find relief for leprosy: "The rabbis say that Pharaoh's daughter was leprous and went down to bathe, but as soon as she touched the basket she became healed."⁶⁹ According to another version indicated in the Babylonian Talmud, she went down to the river "to cleanse herself of her father's idols."⁷⁰ Later, Rashi in his commentary on the same Talmudic text declared that this bathing was an act of conversion to Judaism.

A contrary attitude to the princess is found in the New Testament. Here she is described as a symbol of the pleasures of sin, from which Moses wished to detach himself: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." (Heb. 11:24–25) This attitude is closer to the versions used by Christians, the Septuagint and the Vulgate, which by presenting the maiden as the one who takes out the basket reduced the centrality of the princess in Moses' rescue and her bathing in the

⁶⁷ *Leviticus Rabbah* 1, 3; *Midrash Rabbah: Leviticus* (1983), 6.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6–7. Compare *Exodus Rabbah* I, 26.

⁶⁹ *Midrash Rabbah: Exodus* (1983), 29.

⁷⁰ *Megilah* 13a, Babylonian Talmud (1935–48), *Megilah*, 74. The same is also indicated in *Sotah* 12b; Babylonian Talmud (1935–48), *Sotah*, 62; and compare *Exodus Rabbah* I, 23.

Nile. Accordingly, while in Jewish art Pharaoh's daughter was usually shown as a nude figure performing the rescue in person,⁷¹ the common Christian iconography, in both East and West shows her standing fully dressed on the river bank, ordering her handmaiden by a gesture to fetch the basket. The act of immersion is missing.⁷²

Nevertheless, in the West, one can also find Christian examples that contradict the Vulgate text and depict Pharaoh's daughter standing naked in the water, taking out the basket with her own hands. Such an image occurs in the Bible of Matteo de Planisio, produced in Naples around 1362 (Fig. 9).⁷³ The crowned princess stands in the middle of the river. She is entirely naked; even her genitalia are carefully drawn. Miriam is seated on the left bank, holding the ark-basket, which has just been handed to her by the princess. On the opposite bank, Jochebed, nursing the baby, stands among the handmaidens, one of whom carries the princess's towel.

The volcanic region to the west of Naples, widely celebrated for its medicinal baths, provides the background to the miniature in the Planisio Bible. The various diseases cured in the baths are the subjects of a poem written by Peter of Eboli (c. 1160–c. 1220) for Emperor Frederick II,⁷⁴ which, composed from a medical and practical standpoint and structured in three topographical groups, was probably used as a guide for bathers.⁷⁵ Originally written in Latin, in the fourteenth century it was translated into Neapolitan and French and became very popular among royal and noble patrons as well as more lowly bathers. Twenty-one copies of the treatise, dating from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, have survived; about half are illuminated and include scenes with figures bathing naked.⁷⁶ The popular baths, their curative powers, and their visual representations may explain the appearance of the nude princess in the water in the Planisio Bible.

The illumination combines the local idea of healing water with the theme of baptism, which the artist achieved by alluding to the well-known iconography of Christ's baptism in the Byzantine tradition.

⁷¹ See Gutmann (1960), 16–20; Gutmann (1985), 435–441; Schubert (1994), 285–292; Zahlten (1995), 659–672; Shalev-Eyni (1997), 8–14.

⁷² For the East, see, e.g., the Byzantine Octateuchs; Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), pls. 599–602. For the West see St. Louis Psalter, fol. 29v.

⁷³ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. lat. 3550, fol. 31v.

⁷⁴ Kauffmann (1959), 8–11.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 12–20.

⁷⁶ On the copies and their iconography, see *ibid.*, 21–23.

The composition of the scene and the hand of God emerging from a cloud above the princess are closely related to the Byzantine image of the Baptism of Christ in the Jordan (Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–22).⁷⁷ Comparing the Planisio Bible with the Baptism in the eleventh-century mosaics of Hosios Lukas underscores this similarity (Fig. 10):⁷⁸ The princess, like Christ, stands in the center between two groups situated one on either side of the river. The hand of God above Pharaoh's daughter is paralleled by the Holy Ghost of the baptism, similarly designed as a hand. The princess's handmaiden carrying the towel is reminiscent of the angels holding the cloth to receive the baptized.

The depiction of the finding of Moses in the form of the traditional baptism of Christ presents the event as the baptism of Pharaoh's daughter. This interpretation, which does not reflect the New Testament's negative attitude toward the princess, might be based on some of the Church Fathers who, possibly under the influence of the Jewish attitude, considered her bathing as an act of immersion. Gregorius de Elivera (died c. 392) identifies the princess with *Ecclesia ex gentibus*, who sanctified herself in the pure water.⁷⁹ Earlier, Origen (II, 4) similarly claimed that Pharaoh's daughter who took the baby Moses out of the ark of clay and pitch is *Ecclesia ex gentibus* who received in the water of baptism the law (*lex*) of Moses and removed from it the despised Jewish meanings.⁸⁰ The naked princess in the Planisio Bible with her local context of medicinal baths and overt reference to the iconography of the baptism of Christ gives visual expression to the same ideas, again exemplifying the perception of water as a source of cure and ritual immersion, a perception shared by both religions.

Conclusion

The image in Jewish art of a naked woman bathing is associated with ritual immersion in the *miqveh*, the final step of the purification process following the menstrual period. This image is paralleled in Christian art

⁷⁷ See Zahlten (1995), 660; Shalev-Eyni (1997).

⁷⁸ Maguire (1998), 121–151.

⁷⁹ Tract. VII, 82. See Daniélou (1950), 193.

⁸⁰ *Origène, Homélies sur l'Exode* (1985), 85. The comparison between Pharaoh's daughter and *Ecclesia* appeared later in the text of the Bible Moralisée, though there the image follows the Vulgate and depicts the princess ordering her handmaiden to draw out the ark. See Guest (1995), fol. 16v and 70.

by biblical figures such as Bathsheba and Pharaoh's daughter interpreted as *Ecclesia ex gentibus* and their bathing as an act of baptism. In both the Jewish and the Christian contexts the image of the naked woman bathing illustrates belief in the power of cure and purification by ritual water. However, whereas in the Christian context the image is related to the symbolic figure of Ecclesia and the one-time act of baptism, whose validity is preserved forever, the Jewish image represents an ordinary woman performing the endlessly repeated rite of monthly *niddah*. These differences reflect two opposing ideals of sanctity: the Christian spiritual and symbolic against the Jewish carnal and concrete. Both are expressed in the attitudes of the two societies toward sexual relations within the marital bond.

From its beginnings, Christianity encouraged asceticism and defined marriage as a default procedure to combat prostitution and adultery (I Cor. 7:1–14, 25–34). From the eighth century on, and more strongly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries with the flourishing of the Marian cult, the status of marriage became significantly elevated, and the wedding ceremony was widely accepted as one of the seven sacraments.⁸¹ The service moved into the church and the final stage was the blessing of the chamber and bed of the new couple.⁸² This approach placed much importance on procreation, defining it as one of the main purposes of marriage, and as a justification for marital sex.⁸³ Nevertheless, among medieval theologians, procreation was not necessarily considered a supreme value, and some of them, like Peter Lombard (c. 1100–1160) and Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274), even exalted the state of absolute celibacy between husband and wife as far as it was accepted by both sides.⁸⁴ In any event, carnal marriage was a preferable choice only for those who renounced the spiritual example of the divine union between Christ and Ecclesia by deciding not to adhere to the ideal of monasticism.

Contrary to Christianity, which sanctified the life of asceticism, in Jewish belief marriage and procreation were regarded as the ultimate ideal and the sole possibility for each individual. The commandment to

⁸¹ On Christian attitudes towards sex and marriage, see Brundage (1987) and Brundage (1993). On the place of the church in the formation of marriage, see Ward (2002), 30–34, and more bibliography there.

⁸² *Women's Lives in Medieval Europe* (1993), 83–89.

⁸³ See Shahar (2003), 69. On the differences and similarities between Jewish and Christian attitudes toward reproduction, see Cohen (1989); Baumgarten (2004), 24–28.

⁸⁴ Shahar (2003), 70.

Adam and Eve: “Be fruitful and multiply” (Gen. 1:28) was understood literally and people who did not get married and procreate were not fulfilling their mission on earth. Moreover, intercourse was basically regarded as an integral positive component of the marital state even without the purpose of procreation.⁸⁵ Furthermore, by the strict rules of *niddah*, Jewish belief sanctified the carnal, namely sexual, relations between married couples, as well as the children born to those who observed the rules. Jews stressed this approach in order to define themselves as a sanctified group, and thus all others as the *Sons of Niddah*.

Together with the theological intentions of the images of the ordinary Jewish woman immersing herself and the Christian symbolic woman of Ecclesia being baptized, one can also observe the effect of the basic nature of human instincts and mentality. In both societies, a naked woman bathing arouses the viewer’s desire, and at times, as in the case of Bathsheba, even bears an aspect of temptation. This meaning is further elaborated in profane Christian art, where similar images appear in a context of worldly [please delete] sensuality associated with urban conditions, where mixed bathhouses were common.

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⁸⁵ See Boyarin (1993). The situation of a husband vowing to have no intercourse with his wife was condemned. See *Mishnah, Nashim, Ketuboth* 6:6; *The Mishnah* (1950), 252. The attitude is based on Exodus 21:1. On differences between the Jewish and Christian views on marriage, see Cohen and Horowitz (1990), 225–250. On different variations among Jews and points of similarities to their Christian contemporaries, see Cohen (1989).

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. A woman bathing in a *miqveh*, Hamburg Miscellany, middle Rhine region, ca. 1434; Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Heb. 37, f. 79v.
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- Fig. 10. Baptism of Christ, Hosios Lukas, the eleventh century.

SHE WHO IS NOT NAMED PILATE'S WIFE IN MEDIEVAL ART

Colum Hourihane

Like Pilate himself, comparatively little is known of Pilate's wife apart from the biblical references, where she is not even referred by her own name but spoken of simply as his wife.¹ Again, like her husband in whose shadow she was first referenced, she has remained a mysterious yet powerful presence and has been the focus of much speculation, but very little from the art-history world.² She is the subject of many legends, not least of which is her association with the Emperor Tiberius, who is sometimes documented as being her father. It is claimed that she was the illegitimate daughter of Augustus Caesar's only child, Julia. After the death of her second husband, Julia married Tiberius but did not restrict her attentions to him. Embarrassed by her lifestyle, Tiberius divorced her and banished her from Rome.

The legends recount that it was while in exile that Julia gave birth to Claudia Procula, who was in turn brought back into the family (after Julia's death) by Tiberius. Like her husband, Pilate, about whom there is the same ambiguity, Procula has been the subject of intense literary research, much of which is speculative.³ In this work I hope to shed

¹ I do not believe that the 'Claudia' mentioned in 2 Timothy (4:21) is Pilate's wife, although she has sometimes been seen as the same person. She is called Procula in the *Acta Pilata* but is also called by different names such as Livia or Pilatessa in later medieval drama; see Muir (1995), 250. A more extended version of this essay will be included in a forthcoming monograph I have completed on Pontius Pilate in medieval art.

² The only reference that I am aware of is the recently published article on her by Mellinkoff (2006).

³ Procula is one of those tangential yet fascinating characters who has attracted widespread attention and has featured in many films, plays, and poems. One of the best-known works about her was Charlotte Brontë's *Pilate's Wife's Dream*, first published in 1846. One of the most popular texts on her life is a collection of the letters supposedly written by her and now in the Vatican Library, which was been published by Forucci (1990). Other works that are devoted to her include those by Seidler (1859), Molitor (1867), Taylor (1899), Azzopardi (1899), Hillmann (1927), Turnbull (1928), Van Dyke (1929), Görlich (1931), Harrison (1936), Mayrant (1950), (1952), Le Fort (1955), Kellner (1959), Cavalli (1971), Scholberg (1993), Lindquist (1991), Doolittle (2000), Ware (2001), Hill (2002), and Bynum (2004).

some light on this mysterious character and to correct some of the errors that have been created over time, but most of all I document some of the known images of this shadow, who was to play such a pivotal role and rehabilitate the tarnished reputation of her husband. Procula is best known for her dream, and it would be impossible to separate this aspect from the rest of the character. This essay, although it highlights the significance of the dream, also contextualizes it in relation to what we know of her. A sizable and significant corpus of visual material surrounding her survives, which I examine against biblical and apocryphal texts in an effort to understand her role in the Passion narrative. This essay is dedicated to Elisheva Ravel-Neher for her friendship and support throughout the years I have known her, and like a number of her studies it is intended to open the door for future research.

It has to be said from the outset that Procula is the other side of the coin when compared to Pilate. Whereas he is generally seen as a weak, devious, and cunning character, who condemned Christ to death, she is seen as the opposite. The only biblical reference to her is in Matthew (27:19), where it is recorded that while Pilate sat on a bench, “his wife sent him a message, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that righteous man. I have suffered much in a dream today because of him.’”

Procula’s efforts centered on her belief that Christ was innocent and that her husband should free him. The reasons behind this wish, as described in the Apocrypha, are complex: as we shall see they do not simply focus on her being a Christian and on her attempt to free Christ because of her belief in Him. From as early as the second century she is usually referred to as a Christian as, for example, in Origen (*Homilies*, in Matthew, xxxv), and even today she is still revered as Saint Procula or Procla in the Greek Orthodox Church, with her feast day falling on October 27th. She is also revered in the Coptic Church, where her feast day is celebrated along with that of Pilate on June 25th. All of this is despite the fact that she was naturally a devout Jewess (as recorded in the *Acta Pilata*).

Throughout the Middle Ages Procula was to play a small yet significant role in the trial and Passion of Christ, and although there is no all-consuming visual tradition (unlike that of her husband), I hope to show that her presence is enduring and purposeful and that it changed over time. Interpretations of her character, based on the visual and textual evidence, seem to have wavered. Moreover, she remained relatively unknown until the turn of the nineteenth century when the work of the Augustinian nun Anne C. Emmerich (1774–1824), a follower

of Procula, was made available with the publication by the German poet Klemens Brentano of Emmerich's beliefs in 1833 in *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ According to the Meditations of Anne Catherine Emmerich*. Apart from the allusion in Matthew, Procula is also mentioned in the Apocrypha. Whereas the corpus of surviving material is not anywhere as large as that centered on her husband, there is far more consistency in what is there. The *Martyrology of Pilate*, for example, in the Gospel of Gamaliel⁴ deals almost exclusively with Pilate's suffering and shows him imitating Christ's Passion. Here, Pilate is stripped of his garments and mocked and flogged before being crucified. Throughout this narrative, Procula joins her husband in a state of sanctity and stands at the foot of the cross weeping in imitation of the Virgin. Unlike Christ, however, Pilate was not to die on the cross. He was taken down, washed, and saved, but not before both he and Procula had been crowned by a light (baptized) that came from Heaven. After a trial before the emperor, Pilate was once again crucified outside the city before having his head chopped off. It is recounted that before being killed, Pilate knelt and prayed. His body was taken to Jerusalem to be delivered to his wife and two children, but when his body reached the city, on June 15th, it was discovered that both his wife and children had died on the same day.

Here, Procula's role was very much that of the Christian who dies in faith, but it is also somewhat merged with that of the Virgin, whose place she takes at the foot of the cross. Interestingly, apart from the Virgin, who was not to enter the visual repertoire of this section of the Passion until much later, Procula is the only female to be represented and, in the capacity of one who tries to protect Christ from death, she fulfills the later role of the Virgin. The *Martyrology of Pilate* also recounts for the first time the fact that she was a mother when it ends with: "Here ends the Martyrology of Pilate, of his wife and children. May their intercession be with all the children of baptism. Amen."⁵

⁴ Called after Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder (Acts 5:34, 22:3) a contemporary of Christ, this recounts the Passion events on Good Friday and dates at the earliest to the fifth/sixth century but is most likely later. Two extensive texts deal almost exclusively with Pilate: the first of these (VI.21–VII.9; Mingana's Fragment 15) recounts that Pilate believes in the Resurrection of Christ; the second passage (XI.12–50) dates to the latter part of the eleventh century and the final division of the work describes the correspondence of Pilate and Herod and may be a later addition to the text.

⁵ Mingana (1928); see also Oudenrijn (1959).

Without doubt the most influential and largest apocryphal corpus of Pilatian material is the Gospel of Nicodemus or the *Acta Pilata*.⁶ Despite the volume of this corpus, it is Procula's dream that references her to the text. After the trial it is recorded that:

While he [Pilate] yet thought to rise up, his wife sent unto him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things because of him by night. And Pilate called unto him all the Jews, and said unto them: Ye know that my wife feareth God and favoureth rather the customs of the Jews, with you? They say unto him: Yea, we know it. Pilate saith unto them: Lo, my wife hath sent unto me, saying: Have thou nothing to do with this just man: for I have suffered many things because of him by night. But the Jews answered and said unto Pilate: Said we not unto thee that he is a sorcerer? Behold, he hath sent a vision of a dream unto thy wife. (*Acta Pilata* II.1)

Here, it is a messenger that was sent to Pilate and not his wife who passed on her warning. The nature of her message is not specified and no mention is made of a dream; in fact the Jews accuse Christ of sorcery in that he sent Procula not a dream in itself but a premonition of one. Her belief in Christ appears to be the reason for her message (although this as we shall see later is open to speculation), but it is clear that she also sides with the Jews and as such opens up her role to that of religious mediator. In contrast to Procula's role, it is also clear that Pilate's consideration is for her as much as it is for Christ. Another part of the *Acta Pilata* (although not found in every version) records Pilate's and Procula's presence at the crucifixion (she is never shown in such a position):

And it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the earth until the ninth hour, the sun being darkened; and the curtain of the temple was split in the middle... and the centurion reported what had happened to the procurator. And when the procurator and his wife heard it, they were exceedingly grieved, and neither ate nor drank that day.

⁶ A certain confusion exists over the naming of these texts, which have been called the *Gospels of Nicodemus* since the thirteenth century. These are considered to be among the earliest apocryphal works and have usually been seen as a Christian rebuttal to an even earlier but now lost pagan version. The gospel was originally divided into three separate sections—the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension; the story of Joseph of Arimathea; and the Descent into Hell, which have now been amalgamated into two divisions with the Joseph narrative incorporated into the first part. The most comprehensive studies of this work are by Izydorczyk (1993) and (1997).

Throughout the *Acta Pilata* Procula is characterized as being a strong Jew rather than a Christian or pagan, which contradicts the fact that she is generally seen as a Christian in all of the other Apocrypha.

A number of fragments of varying dates are attached to the texts of the *Acta Pilata*, including the *Paradosi Pilati*.⁷ This adds little new to our knowledge of Procula, except that it describes her death through joy when she saw her husband received by the angel of the Lord upon his death in Rome after the trial by Caesar. It also recounts that she was buried next to him.

In terms of early Christian commentaries, Chrysostom is one of the few writers to deal with Claudia Procula, and for him she acts as a funnel through which “Truth” can be seen. Was her dream the dream of Truth? He attributes to her a clarity of vision and cleanliness of spirit that allowed her to see the dangers that were associated with condemning Christ to death, which were achieved through her dream or vision. She represents an insight and vision that Pilate had not fully developed within himself or else could not yet express verbally. Whereas Pilate goes through doubt and anguish, Claudia Procula has no trouble in understanding her dream or in verbalizing it (and yet the details that are recorded are general and no way specific). In her vision, she is not only given this insight into Christ and Truth but also, like a martyr for her faith, was to suffer because of it:

And when he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, “have thou nothing to do with this just man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.” See what a thing takes place again, sufficient to recall them all. For together with the proof from the things done, the dream too was no small thing. And wherefore doth he not see it himself? Either because she was more worthy, or because he, if he had seen it, would not have been equally believed; or would not so much as have told it. Therefore it was ordered that the wife should see it, so that it might be manifest to all. And she doth not merely see it, but also suffers many things, that from his feeling towards his wife, the man may be made more reluctant to the murder. And the time too contributed not a little, for on the very night she saw it.⁸

We are told that her warning to Pilate was given in the *praetorium* or hall of judgment, and it has traditionally been seen as a reinforcement of Christ’s innocence and her husband’s belief in it. As a rule, she represents

⁷ Tischendorf (1876), 413–416 and Elliott (1999), 205–225.

⁸ Prevost (1986), 512.

the physical manifestation of Pilate's conscience and adds to the sense of frustration that surrounds him. We do not know any further details of her dream—whether it focused only on Christ's innocence or also on the trouble that would befall her husband. Was there a more sinister side to the dream in that it could have been sent by the Devil and if she had succeeded and Pilate had acted upon it mankind's salvation would have been prevented? It is this aspect of the dream that, as we shall see, seems to have been given visual weight at varying times in the medieval period.

The setting of Pilate in his judgment room when Procula intervened to tell him of her dream also reinforces the contrast between formal judgment and personal truth. Clarity and Truth were wavering in the official context and yet personal belief and courage intervened in the form of his wife's personal intervention in her expression of support.

It was she, who, according to John, was to convince Pilate to find Christ innocent of any wrongdoing. The use of the dream as a means of warning or foreboding in the New Testament is restricted to Matthew, where it is found three times—all of which are similar.⁹

Iconography

At face value, Procula's actual dream is rarely shown and, to my knowledge, is represented only three times (see below). Rather, it is her advising or warning Pilate that dominates her iconography. Nevertheless, it may also be possible that her dream is represented far more frequently than we believe by her unusual imagery and that various elements are conflated.

As a subject she first appears relatively late in the visual repertoire in what can only be described as vignettes, where she is usually represented as a disembodied head and always in proximity to Pilate but never in direct communication with him. I believe that this focus on her head, which is, of course, the center of human thought and rationalization, represents her dream and in showing this, the medieval artist was in fact depicting her dream as well. Dreams are traditionally seen as representing the most subjective aspect of the character; thus Procula's may be seen as a manifestation of her belief in Christ and her movement away

⁹ They are Matthew 1:20; 2:13; 2:12; 27:19.

from Judaism, but it is clear that this is not uniformly represented and may not be the only factor underlying her visual repertoire. The history of dreams in the Middle Ages has received considerable attention but not from an artistic perspective.¹⁰ The corpus on royal dreams has formed the benchmark for their study, especially those of the ninth century and usually from a political perspective, where they are seen as “the most intensely subjective statements of Carolingian political thought.”¹¹ Over time Procula’s image develops and more of her body begins to appear with the greater awareness of her role in the narrative and the developing role she was to assume in drama, which of course had little to do with her original purpose in the Passion narrative.

The representation of Procula’s dream is a late response to the more political dreams of the previous century and has to be seen as a visual statement reflecting the significant interest in the Passion narrative that developed during this period. This dream is clearly not entirely of a political nature, but rather has its basis in the theology of the period—a theology that focused on the culpability of those responsible for Christ’s death, which of course impacted on Jewish communities throughout western Europe. On the basis of what survives, Procula first appears in the late tenth century (ca. 970–980) in the Fulda Sacramentary (Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Theol. 231, fol. 60r) (Fig. 1).¹² The small detail in this Ottonian manuscript shows her veiled head through the windows of the *praetorium*. The crowned Pilate sits in front, surrounded by an armed bodyguard, and is completely oblivious to her warning. In many ways the separation of fact from fiction that dreams represent is not yet manifest in this vignette. Her husband was a well-established visual character at this time who was linked to anti-Semitism, but the same cannot be said for his wife at this early stage. Her image here is relatively neutral and in many ways her character conforms to the concept of “imagined history.”¹³ She reminds us of what could have happened had her warning been heeded and Christ not been crucified. Yet, this is at the core of her ambiguity because had that happened mankind would not have been saved. Her inclusion as such, and it really is her dream

¹⁰ Among the scholars who have studied the phenomenon are Kagan (1990), Kruger (1992), and Dutton (1994).

¹¹ Dutton (1994), 1.

¹² Beissel (1894), Col. 70, Richter and Schönfelder (1912), Palazzo (1994), 53–55, 189.

¹³ Dutton (1994), 3.

that is represented here by her head, reinforces Christ's innocence and her husband's reluctance or inability to save him, as well as the viewer's frustration and involvement in the narrative. She adds to the drama of the narrative. This isolated image did not give rise to any visual tradition and it was not until the eleventh century that she is found in any significant numbers—and even then she is rare.

By the eleventh century Pilate was beginning to assume the swarthy and dark racial features of a Jew, as in the fresco cycle in the Church of Sant'Angelo in Formis in Rome, but his wife was never to take on such a characterization. Up to the end of the fifteenth century, by which stage Pilate had undergone many racial affiliations, Procula was always to remain constant to her fashionable Roman origins. The frescoes in the nave of the Church of Sant'Angelo in Formis date to the late eleventh/early twelfth century,¹⁴ and the image of Pilate is part of the Passion narrative. It shows the revisionist program first found in fifth-century Rome, in which Pilate washes his hands and is immediately followed by Christ carrying the cross. Pilate is clearly a Jew with his rich clothing, beard, and dark features, in contrast to the light-skinned and lightly bearded Christ.

Interestingly, Procula, whose bust once again peeks through a window in the *praetorium*, from behind Pilate, is lightly colored and a foil to her darker husband in the foreground. The choice of subjects in this as well as in many of the other fresco cycles of this period was complex and may have been determined, as Tronzo has shown, by such factors as the liturgy and Byzantine influences.¹⁵ Her dream here and its coloration in particular may well be an externalization of her inner light and belief in Christ. This of course brings us back to the central dilemma—whether she and her dream represent good or evil! This is an issue that I believe changes over time in response to theological and political factors: the nature of evil, the guilt of those who killed Christ, or the element of predestination that such characters fulfilled, Pilate's Jewishness (which was to waver over time), and anti-Semitism toward the Jew, to name just a few.

These images are similar to another powerful depiction of Pilate from a slightly later period in the Church of San Marco in Venice,¹⁶ which

¹⁴ Kraus (1893), 18ff. Pls. I, II, and III; Wettstein (1962), 31ff.; Morisani (1962), 23ff.; Bergman (1974), 172, 176, 181.

¹⁵ Tronzo (1985), 93–114.

¹⁶ Morey (1942), 105ff.; Berg (1961), 40.

draws on the same iconographical source as the first example—the *Acta Pilata*. The two images are found on the front (right-hand) column of the four magnificent columns supporting the altar canopy. One of the masterpieces of the period, Pilate is represented twice. Here, the narrative is correctly ordered and he is found immediately after the scene in which Judas hangs himself, and the opening scene is the one in which he Christ enters the *praetorium*. Surrounded by guards, Christ is venerated by Pilate's messenger who puts his handkerchief on the ground for Jesus to walk on—a scene found only in the *Acta Pilata*:

The Pilate did so, ordered one of his messengers to be called, and said to him: "Go with careful discretion and call here unto me the one who is called Jesus"... The messenger... finding the Saviour, and prostrating himself before Him, he immediately stretched out on the ground what he carried in his hands which was a piece of cloth, and therewith himself fell stretched out on the earth.¹⁷

Immediately to the right, in front of Jesus we have a seated Pilate—the symbol of justice who now has his table, inkwell, and soldiers with ensigns—the same accoutrements found in the Rossano gospel image some two centuries earlier. He no longer looks away from Christ, but now faces him with his right hand raised in a gesture of authority. This scene is placed immediately below the Crucifixion in a direct reference to sentence and judgment, cause and effect, crime and punishment. Procula is shown as a small head immediately behind Pilate under the arch that frames all of these images. Here, she is represented once again as a disembodied head that looks through a window at the seated Pilate and very much acts as a visual manifestation of his conscience. Her image is particularly similar to that in the fresco cycle at Sant' Angelo in Formis.

By the eleventh century Procula emerges from the shadows and can be shown as a full-length figure standing by her husband's side, as in the fresco in the nave of the Church of Sant' Urbano alla Caffarella in Rome¹⁸ (Fig. 2). Even though she is there, she does not yet communicate with Pilate, which adds to the futility of the visual drama.

¹⁷ Cross (1996), 143.

¹⁸ Marle (1923), 133–134, 146, 148–149, 161–163; Williamson (1987), 224–228.

Procula is rare in the twelfth century, and I am aware of only a few examples of her image.¹⁹ One of the finest is a mosaic in the southern transept of Monreale Cathedral,²⁰ which shows a specterlike, three-quarter-length figure under a separate canopy, distanced from Pilate but gesturing toward him with her right hand. Slightly grotesque, she is clearly warning him of her dream, and this is the first instance of her direct communication with her husband. It is also the first instance of her dream being communicated and of her moving beyond being a representation of the dream alone—the liberation of her character beyond her attribute. Her hands mirror those of Pilate, who gestures to Christ in the same way. In between Procula and Pilate, we have the attendant with the water basin, who although looking at Procula points toward Pilate. The entire composition centers on the language of the hands, and we are involved through such gestures in the need to get the message across.

As Pilate's character becomes more Jewish in the twelfth century and his involvement in Christ's death increases, so also does Procula's presence with its heightening of Christ's innocence or else its representation as a need to be constantly aware of the dangers of the Devil. It really is in relation to Pilate that her character is now defined and she has yet to develop an independence or composition of her own. In many ways she can be thought of as representing the Christian argument for Christ's release against Pilate's Jewish judgment.

We are never told in the Canonical texts why Procula believed in her dream or what forced her into action; those concepts are clearly left to the viewer to gauge for themselves, but the apocryphal material does say that she "believed" in Christ and that it was for this reason that she was chosen to have the insight. It is clear that what eventually happened is related in the Apocrypha and that is her salvation where she dies in the hands of the Lord. Even though there is ambiguity underlying the reason she wanted Christ's life spared, it is clear that the textual records all tell of her being saved, and this must reflect her good intentions to save what she believed was an innocent man. Her presence threatens Pilate's judgment and this was clearly understood by the artists responsible for

¹⁹ One of the best-known examples, although based on reconstructions, is that in the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herradis of Landsberg (Strasbourg, Bibliothèque de la Ville, fol. 143r). The manuscript is now destroyed but reconstructions have postulated that it was one of the themes in this work; see Green (1979), 171, 206–208, fig. 230, pl. 91.

²⁰ Demus (1960), 14; Glass (1970), 120.

these works, where she stands as a foil, usually employing light colors in contrast to Pilate's dark features. This was no low-impact dream even though we are never told what it actually was. It portends a troubled time not only for Christ but Pilate and the empire as well. It is clear that her husband will suffer because of the judgment and in many ways this brings in the element of the political involving the state.

Procula was clearly a popular figure, as is evidenced by her large role in the now missing section of the *Ludus Passione* from the *Carmina Burana*, which dates to ca. 1180.²¹ Sadly, she does not appear in the fragment that survives, but it is clear that she was one of the principal figures in the drama. Compared to what we know of her character in later drama (see below) it would have been interesting to see how she was depicted in this text.

By the thirteenth century Procula is rarely shown but her presence continues.²² From a physical presence in the twelfth century she once again moves backward into the shadows. She does not, for example, appear in the Bible Moralisée (British Library, Harley 1526–27, II, fol. 56r), but her presence is indicated by the letter that her messenger brings to Pilate while he is with the high priest. She herself may not have been shown, but her letter was a constant reminder of her dream, warning, and presence up to the fifteenth century, as in the glass in the Church of Saint Mary, Fairford.²³

Elsewhere in the thirteenth century, Procula can be seen looking over Pilate's shoulder as in a small initial in the late-thirteenth-century French Book of Hours (London, British Library, Ms. Stowe 17, fol. 72r).²⁴ This is her usual role as a constant reminder of Christ's innocence and the corrupt nature of the trial. A late-thirteenth-century fragment of the jubé from Bourges Cathedral (now in Bourges, Cathedral Museum, ex Louvre Museum, 888–891; Fig. 3) may also show Procula before a seated and cross-legged Pilate—his standard pose in most of these compositions.²⁵ These damaged reliefs date to the latter part of the century, and in all probability this panel showed Procula with a fragment of a

²¹ Dronke (1994), 185–237.

²² Among those known to the author is a miniature in Baltimore (Walters Museum, Ms. W. 86, fol. 15v) that dates to the early thirteenth century; see Randall (1989–97).

²³ Wayment (1984), 31, and the fifteenth-century *Speculum Passionis* (Colmar, Stadtbibliothek, Ms. 306, fol. LXXXr), where her letter is delivered to Pilate without her being shown.

²⁴ Bober (1940), 11–26.

²⁵ Joubert (1979), 341–369; Hamon (1955), 396–397; Ribault (1995), 167–175.

still visible scroll approaching a seated Pilate. In contrast to this image, we have a particularly fine example from a mid/late-thirteenth-century Psalter-Hours from northeastern France (Philadelphia, Free Library, Weidener 9, fol. 9v; Fig. 4), where she is shown in the scene of Christ before Pilate. Dressed in a wimpled veil, she stands next to her husband but looks at Christ. This is one of the first examples we have of a fashionable Procula and from then onward she is usually dressed in contemporary clothing, which becomes one of her most recognizable attributes. In regard to her clothing, the greatest focus was to be on her headdress. Her disembodied head reappears once again in illuminations of the Gospel of Nicodemus (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Vit. 23–28, dating to the second half of the thirteenth century), where she is shown behind Pilate as he passes judgment on Christ.²⁶

Even though Procula is venerated in the Eastern world, images of her there are few and far between. Two exceptions are a Crusader painting now in the Coptic Museum in Cairo and the fresco cycle in the Decani Church. The first of these is a large triptych in which the Crucifixion dominates all other subjects. Pilate being warned by his wife, the Betrayal and Arrest, the Casting of Lots for Christ's Garments, and Christ being led to Calvary are all found below it (Fig. 5). In the triptych, which dates to the late thirteenth/early fourteenth century, she is shown as a veiled presence, whispering into the crowned Pilate's ear, in very much the Western tradition. The second example comes from the western wall of the nave in the Church in Decani and dates to the fourteenth century (ca. 1338–1347). Byzantine in style, it shows the scenes of Christ before Pilate and Pilate being warned by Procula. With his head turned toward his wife, the scene illustrates the dilemma facing Pilate in a more human manner than previously found.²⁷ As in the references in the Apocrypha, Procula is more often than not represented as a ghostlike cameo in the background, but before her full visual flowering in the fifteenth century there are three images that show her actual dream. These represent an extension of her iconography and in many ways foreshadow how significant a character she was to become, especially with the development of drama. It is interesting that in the canonical text her dream happens by day, but in all of the Apocrypha

²⁶ Among the modern studies of her character are those by Damase (1932) and a fictional biography by Simons (1950); Doolittle (2000).

²⁷ Petrovic and Boskovic (1941), pl. ccx; Kesic-Ristic (1995), 124.

it specifically occurs by night (and it is this image that seems to be represented in the visual corpus). Nighttime is normally associated with evil as well as with sleeping. In two of these images she is in bed and being prompted by a small demon who flies in midair. He touches her with the warning as in the *Hortus Deliciarum*, Queen Mary Psalter (British Library, Roy. 2B. VII, fol. 249r)²⁸ and Bedford Hours (British Library, Add. 18850, fol. 235r). Why such a demon was included adds belief that the dream was not a good one, but rather was prompted by evil to prevent mankind's salvation. One of the Apocrypha states that it was Christ the sorcerer who sent her the dream. The Devil did his deeds under the cover of night, and it may well be this that is shown here. This same demon is frequently shown prompting Pilate in exactly the same manner.

No reason is given in any of the canonical sources as to why Procula was chosen for such a dream. The Apocrypha states that she was a "worthy" woman and it is because of this that she was chosen instead of Pilate, as she was more likely to be a valid conduit. Is it significant that she was a woman or that she was a Jew or that she was not directly involved in the judgment? She was clearly an educated woman who knew the value of such a dream and was not content to let it pass unremarked. It also seems that she may have believed in the dream. Her social context was clearly important, and as a Jewess of some authority she would, like her husband, have been perceived as a figure who could be believed. Furthermore, as a Jew, Procula could dream of Christ as the True Church, but how far this could be made real was a different matter. Biblical dreams usually represent direct communication with God the Father and are usually indicative of a special relationship that may well lie behind Procula's saintly and venerated status in the Eastern world.

Although the dream is not specified it is clear that its impact is something that she fears and that it was not a good dream—it would have repercussions. Her dream was a warning, not simply an unfulfilled narrative. She offers a solution to her husband to avoid the troubles that may befall the state. We do not know who sent the dream to her in this instance and therein lies the problem. Had her dream been heeded and

²⁸ This is the most extensive treatment of her in medieval art in that she is given two miniatures on the same folio—one representing the actual dream and next to it there is the warning to Pilate, both of which are separate.

acted upon she would have been responsible for going against God the Father's wishes and thwarting predestination. Her dream could have changed the course of mankind's history. It is unlikely then that this dream could have been sent by God the Father or by Christ himself. The visual corpus hints that it was sent by the Devil and this may be a response to the apocryphal criticism of the Jews that it was derived from Christ as a sorcerer and an agent of evil.

Procula's dream is not a personal one and by acting on it she externalizes it for mankind. Initially it is of considerable importance, but once it is made known it soon loses power. It is ignored and not acted upon by her husband, which is in contrast to her later role in medieval drama, where she even supersedes her husband's importance (and he at times is even more important than Christ). It simply adds to the frustration of the proceedings, which in themselves also reflect an abuse of power. Of course, by virtue of it being included, this sense of powerlessness is renewed every time the narrative is read and as such it is an effective device. She does not specify whether she believes that Christ is innocent—simply that her husband should have nothing to do with him. This may of course be understood as indicating that it is her husband who is most important and not Christ—although such an interpretation has not been universally accepted since the early Christian period when the Church Fathers first commented on her.

Her Jewishness was clearly a relevant factor in that it highlighted the power of Christ on a nonbeliever and like Pilate himself it showed the power of conversion for the nonbeliever. Her belief in the dream can be seen as a belief in Christ himself, but ultimately it is an unfulfilled dream. For the Greeks, dreams were external and objective beyond the conduits who received them and they were usually seen as foretelling events of great importance. Is Procula's dream simply an omen or portent of the Crucifixion? If it is then it is also unsatisfactory in that it focuses not on the death of Christ directly but on an unspecified aspect of the man himself—his "righteousness." It is precisely because of what we know to have ensued and are aware of the larger Passion narrative that we know Procula's dream to have been true and not a false dream. It was not simply the product of her sleep or imagination, but was given by a force outside of her being. The borders between a dream and a vision are imprecise, but it seems that true visions relate precisely to what will happen and are direct communications from God, whereas dreams may be the product of the self and are not always God given, although it is also clear that many were. Owing to our lack of informa-

tion as to the nature of what she dreamt, it is not possible to describe Procula's dream as a true vision.

Her dream in many ways, in its fragmentary nature, adds to the confused narrative and it is like an awakened dream in its inconclusiveness. If it was intended as a foil to highlight Christ's innocence it has remained a relatively neglected one in that she is largely unknown and it is a somewhat unsuccessful construct in that we do not know its nature or exact purpose. We do not know the narrative of her dream and that adds to the unsatisfactory nature of her role. It is our interpretation that is imposed on her dream and it may be totally unrelated to what was intended. As Dutton has highlighted in the case of political dreams of the medieval period, it is "the issue of an acceptable interpretation that is crucial,"²⁹ and this does not happen here.

No such demon is found in the Armenian Gospels of Prince Vasak (Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution, 32.18, p. 1813), which dates to the mid-late thirteenth century and once again shows her reclining on her bed pointing to a departing messenger.³⁰ Why she was not represented more frequently in the Eastern world is a mystery, but it may be that it comments or reflects badly on Pilate himself, who was also favorably viewed in the East.

Procula often appears in German-speaking territories such as in the late-fourteenth-century panel painting now in the Kisters Collection in Kreuzlingen,³¹ where her veiled head whispers into Pilate's left ear and mirrors Judas's kiss on the left side of the panel. Pilate washes his hands and looks away, ignoring her pleas. In many ways her whispering in his ear with good advice is a visual parallel to the frequently found scene in which the Devil whispers in Pilate's ear telling him to kill Christ. There is no consistency as to which ear Procula or the Devil whispers in, but it is clear that the advice of the one did not agree with that of the other. A fashionable image of Procula in Pilate's *Washing of the Hands* is found in an early-fourteenth-century picture Bible now in Freiburg im Breisgau and New York.³² Like Pilate, she is dressed in the style of the upper classes in this period and is shown in a high headdress with

²⁹ Dutton (1994), 24.

³⁰ One of the few examples known to this author is the fresco from the Church of the Saviour, Nerediti that dates to 1199. Now badly damaged, it is not clear if it shows Pilate and Procula seated behind a table or more likely Annas and Caiaphas.

³¹ Pieper (1988), 1–7.

³² Beckmann and Schroth (1960).

ruffs around her neck. By the start of the fourteenth century, her presence was not always necessary and the word or message was all that was needed to convey the truth. This is found in an early-fourteenth-century Armenian Gospel Book (the Gladzor Gospels, Los Angeles, University of California Research Library, Armenian I, p. 169),³³ in which the Jewish messenger hands the seated Pilate a scroll from Procula with her warning. Simple in style, the drama of the future is foretold in the scroll, which is centrally placed between the two figures against a white background, in contrast to the figures of both Pilate and the messenger, which are highly colored.

Another fine fourteenth-century example is in a missal now in Halberstadt (Library, Domgymnasium, 114, fol. 21r), which shows Pilate washing his hands but facing the full-length Procula, who is holding a blank scroll.³⁴ She is nearly always veiled, whether it is in the twelfth or fifteenth century, and her headdress, like that of Pilate, is indicative of how she was viewed. The more opulent and stylish her headdress, the less she appears as a serious character but rather as one who is more interested in herself, as in the drama of the period. Here, she stands between the flagellated Christ and the judge.³⁵ She is also represented in an illustration of the Prime for the Long Hours of the Cross in an early-fourteenth-century French manuscript (New York, Morgan Library, M. 60, fol. 17v; Fig. 6), where the full-length figure with a fashionable wimpled headdress raises her hand to Pilate, who washes his hands in front of Christ.

Drama

Procula figures prominently in the drama of the late medieval period (York and N-Town plays, for example). In the York cycle, she has her own play (Number 30 along with *Christ before Pilate*), which was paid for by the Tapiterers and Couchers. In these, her character is completely

³³ Matthews and Sanjan (1991), 111–112.

³⁴ Hinz (1962), 226.

³⁵ Another fourteenth-century example is a fresco in Waltensburg Church (nave) dating to the ca. 1350 and attributed to the Waltensburger Master, see Gantner (1936–47), 282. Other examples include those in the Church of Maria di Donna Regina, Naples (fresco, first half of the fourteenth century), Oxford, Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 4.4, fol. 236v (late fourteenth century).

at odds with the visual corpus.³⁶ There has been much research as to how drama and art influenced each other and it is clear in studying her character that there was interaction but not on a continuing basis. In the N-Town plays, she is brash, interfering, sexually charged, slightly deranged, vain, ostentatious, and vulgar. She clearly comes from the upper levels of society but does not know how to behave. Her dream closely resembles a nightmare and her wish to warn Pilate is seen as interference and meddling. Here, her dream is normally seen as being inspired by the Devil (who interestingly is called *Legio* in the *Passione di Revello*).³⁷ It is seen as the Devil's attempt to prevent Christ's crucifixion and as such to prevent mankind's salvation. This interpretation removes the simple premise that Procula acted out of faith in Christ; we can now see that she may have been a pawn of the Devil in his efforts to prevent Christ being crucified.

The contemporary debate surrounding female visionary texts has been viewed as particularly relevant to Procula in these plays.³⁸ Such a characterization has been interpreted as indicating the lack of authority held by noblewomen and the changes in society, especially what happened in relation to women in late medieval England.³⁹ Whereas these issues may be relevant to fifteenth-century society, they do not add immediately to Procula's real role in the Passion.

Of all her attributes, it is her costumes that stand out the most. They are elaborate and rich, as she says herself:

Consayue nowe my countenance so comly and clere.
The coloure of my corse is full clere,
And in richness of robis I am rayed.

But these are elements that are not always highlighted in images of her. It is clear that she dresses in contemporary fashion but there are only one or two instances in which the richness of her garments in these plays is represented and even then they are not luxurious or vulgar. More often than not she is veiled and discrete and there are times that she is nunlike. Her position within these images is similarly unobtrusive and she never occupies center stage with one exception (see below).

³⁶ An insightful analysis of her role in the N-Town plays is given in Norrington (2004), 132–140; see also Davidson (1984), 99–113.

³⁷ Cornagliotti (1976).

³⁸ Nisse (2005). The third chapter in this book is devoted to Procula.

³⁹ Norrington (2004), 132.

Her disembodied head or bust-length profile does not appear extended until the late medieval period and even then she is not the harridan described in these plays.

Minor dramatic influences gradually get absorbed into the visual corpus. One such possible influence is her encounter in the bedchamber with Satan. Satan's role is to remind us on the one hand that if he has his wish and his prompting of Procula succeeds Christ will not be crucified and mankind will not be saved, while on the other hand a more simplistic reasoning is that he represents evil. Her dream is suddenly given dramatic contextualization when Satan appears to her. It can also be seen as no longer a dream but a nightmare, and she does not have to be asleep or dreaming when the Devil comes to her, but it is always to inform her of the dream. It may well be this that is illustrated in an early-fifteenth-century painting from the central Rhineland, now in Utrecht.⁴⁰ Part of a winged altarpiece, it shows Christ before Pilate, who washes his hands. Procula is shown standing close behind the seated Pilate, to his left. Dressed in a veil and robe, she is approached by a demon flying in midair, in much the same way that she was in the Queen Mary Psalter, who whispers into her ear, which is a conflation of the actual dream and the warning to Pilate. A number of these whispering scenes have been noted by Mellinkoff.⁴¹ The interpretation centers on whether or not Procula was an agent of the Devil and is receiving instructions from him.

Another possible interaction with contemporary drama, although apparently predating it, may well be the delivery of the warning to Pilate by a messenger. The *Acta Pilata* first records this incident and no reference is made to Procula actually going to Pilate. In a number of images she herself does not appear and all that is shown is her letter arriving. Even though this is seen as early as the thirteenth century as in the Bible Moralisée (British Library, Harley 1526–27, II, fol. 56r), it is also mentioned in the York and N-Town plays. Here we are told that she was so overcome by the dream that she asks her son (a dramatic invention that is not referenced elsewhere; in the Passion of St. Genevieve 178 the message is brought by their son and daughter [her son is called Joel in Palatinus, where he also holds the basin in which his

⁴⁰ Reproduced in Schiller (1971–72), vol. 2, pl. 222.

⁴¹ Mellinkoff (2006), 340.

father washes his hands]) to deliver the message to his father.⁴² Having refused once, he eventually agrees to hand the message to Pilate. This completely removes Procula from the warning as in a number of images described above. She is a character for whom the audience would have little sympathy or empathy, unlike her portrayal in the visual corpus, where her pleadings always add to the pathos of Christ's situation. The visual corpus is clearly more in keeping with the descriptions from the Apocrypha, and her character in these plays appears to have been hijacked for reasons of artistic license.

There is a significant corpus of images in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, such as the frescoes in Naples (the Church of Maria di Donna Regina, nave) or in Waltensburg (Church, nave). In both of these it is her warning to Pilate that is represented. She is full length in both images and smartly dressed as befits a woman of standing. By the start of the fifteenth century she is a stronger visual presence as, for example, in an interesting manuscript now in Cologne (Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Ms. 232). Made by the Master of the St. Bartholomew Altar (active 1470–1510 in Cologne), it shows Christ before an aged and seated Pilate. Procula, little more than a fashionably dressed head here with her hair piled high and wearing a wimple, is behind Pilate's shoulder and faces Christ. Exactly the same composition is mirrored in the margins below the full-page miniature, except that in this instance the characters are shown as dogs, an allusion to the Jews as rabid dogs first made in the early Christian period but not visually shown until the fourteenth century.⁴³ The seated Pilate is a dog, as indeed is Procula standing behind him in the same pose as the humans in the miniature above. The more obviously canine characters among the Jews push a lamb representing Christ toward the throne. While not of the same species of dog as the Jews, it is clear that both Procula and Pilate are also of the same family.⁴⁴ It really is only in the fifteenth century that she is nearly consistently shown as a full-length figure.⁴⁵

⁴² Frank (1922).

⁴³ Marrow (1977), 167–181.

⁴⁴ Illustrated in Marrow (1977), pl. III.

⁴⁵ An exception is in Paris (Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS. 976, f. 90r). This late-fifteenth-century *Life of Christ* was possibly made in Bourges, and despite the fact that it is a head only representation it is one of the most powerful in the corpus. Her head, which is significantly larger than Pilate's, has expressively sad and downcast eyes in contrast to Pilate in the foreground, who is extravagantly dressed in a short red tunic with fur trimming. She is dressed in plain blue and has straight hair.

Procula sometimes moves into a more prominent location, away from behind her husband's shoulders. Typical of such imagery is the miniature in a Book of Hours dating to the early fifteenth century (The Hague, Royal Library, MS. 10E2, fol. 73v).⁴⁶ Possibly executed in Flanders by the Master of the Gold Scrolls (ca. 1450) she is shown in a miniature for the Prime for the Hours of the Cross. She still whispers in Pilate's ear but stands apart in her fashionable attire. She does not have the standard veil and instead her hair is arranged in two buns, one on either side.

It is in this period that she appears to contrast most with Pilate. He is nearly always extravagantly dressed in fine robes with fur trim, whereas she frequently adopts a more simple dress code. It is at this time that she adopts a nunlike and sad expression with downcast eyes as, for example, in the illustration at the opening of Terce in the Hours of Elizabeth the Queen (London, British Library, 5001, fol. 15r). Dating to ca. 1420–1430, this miniature shows Christ before Pilate with Procula's head between them. She is dressed in blue and mirrors Christ's robe in contrast to the opulently dressed Pilate. Her head is again covered in a blue robe in a manuscript of *Le Fleur de Histoires* (Bibliothèque Mazarine, Ms. 1559, fol. 218v). Here, she stands next to Pilate, on his right side, but does not talk to him. The three-quarter-length figure stands impassively with her head covered, in contrast to earlier examples. She occupies a center-stage position in the Hours of Margaret of Rohan (Princeton, University Library, Ms. Garrett 55, fol. 43r, Fig. 7). Made in the workshop of Jean de Bourdichon (ca. 1475–1485), this full-page miniature shows Procula with her right hand raised and her left holding the scroll. In this miniature she is the focus of attention and is in contrast to the elaborately dressed Pilate. Wearing a simple veil and plain robe, she resembles the Virgin Mary in her protestations of grief at the foot of the cross and in many ways brings us back to her apocryphal counterpart.

Slightly later she seems to revert once again to the more fashionable dress sense as in a miniature now in Nuremberg (Germanisches Nationalmuseum). Made by the Master LCZ, the subject is ostensibly the Carrying of the Cross, but Pilate and Procula are both shown in the background. He is wearing the *pileum cornutum* or funnel-type hat favored by the Jews as she approaches from the right and talks not to

⁴⁶ Rogers (2002).

Pilate but to one of the other Jews in the image. Possibly influenced by medieval drama, it is similar to those narratives in which she addresses the audience rather than her husband in an effort to heighten the hopelessness of the situation.⁴⁷

The most interesting image of Procula has to be that in a late-fourteenth-century Psalter now in Oxford (Bodleian Library, Auct. D. 4. 4., fol. 236v), where the instruments of the Passion are arranged around a central Crucifixion. These instruments include all of the recognizable and standard *Arma Christi* from the dice to the pincers, flagellation pillar, and so forth. Also included in this visual repertoire are images of Pilate's hands being washed by water—a motif found elsewhere in the instruments of the Passion. The last motif in this Psalter image, however, includes the holy women, who are accompanied by Caiaphas and Procula. What she is doing here remains a mystery, but her inclusion indicates that we have come full circle from her Jewish beliefs in the Apocrypha of the fifth and sixth centuries to her Christian and Marian-like status in the fourteenth and fifteenth.

Procula is a character that reflects much of the ambiguity found in her husband and yet it is unfair to see her only in relation to him. A Roman and yet a follower of the Jewish faith, a Jew and yet one who believed in Christ, a believer and yet one who may have been the pawn of the Devil, a Christian and yet an extravagantly dressed woman of the world are just some of the opposing features that make up her character. A saint and yet according to the drama of the period, a brash woman given to self-promotion, she dies a Christian, but like her husband she was ineffective in her attempts to save Christ. She may have been characterized in the drama of the period as a vulgar woman and yet she has elements of the Virgin embedded in her visual and textual composition. From her visual origins as a ghostlike and distant figure, she was to assume a definite and purposeful presence, which hopefully will be extended with further research.

⁴⁷ Illustrated in Mellinkoff (1993), pl. III.48.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Christ before Pilate in the lower margin of the miniature with the bust-length head of Procula in the *praetorium*. The Fulda Sacramentary (Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Theol. 231, fol. 60r). (Photo: The Index of Christian Art, Princeton University).

Fig. 2. Christ before Pilate in the upper register of the now badly damaged fresco. Church of San Urbano alla Caffarella, Rome. (Photo: The Index of Christian Art, Princeton University).

- Fig. 3. Procula before a seated Pilate. Carving from the jubé in Bourges Cathedral (now in Bourges, Cathedral Museum, ex Louvre Museum, 888–891. (Photo: the author).
- Fig. 4. Christ before Pilate with Procula to Pilate's left. Detail from a mid-late thirteenth century Psalter-Hours from northeastern France (Philadelphia, Free Library, Weidener 9, fol. 9v). (Photo: Courtesy of the Free Library, Philadelphia).
- Fig. 5. Pilate warned by wife from an icon now in the Coptic Museum, Cairo. Late thirteenth/early fourteenth century. (Photo: Courtesy of the Paul Van Moorsel Centre for Christian Art and Culture).
- Fig. 6. Christ before Pilate with Procula at Pilate's side. Miniature from an early fourteenth-century French Book of Hours (New York, Morgan Library, M. 60, fol. 17v. (Photo: Courtesy of the Morgan Library).
- Fig. 7. Christ before Pilate with Procula standing in the center background. Miniature from the Hours of Margaret of Rohan (Princeton University Library, Ms. Garrett 55, fol. 43r). (Photo: Courtesy of Princeton University Library).

PART FOUR
BYZANTINE ART

EVE'S NUDITY
A SIGN OF SHAME OR PRECURSOR OF
CHRISTOLOGICAL ECONOMY?

Mati Meyer

Byzantine art includes numerous images of female nudity, which is an unexpected phenomenon given that this is an art that prefers to hide rather than unveil the human body,¹ but the question as to why this is so has—surprisingly enough—only been addressed superficially.² As one would expect, the most widespread occurrence of such nudity is in connection with religious subjects, the place of honor being held by the Creation story.

This essay focuses on representations of Eve's nudity in five Byzantine Octateuchs—densely illustrated Bibles produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In the early Genesis episodes, Adam and Eve have an astonishing physical, asexualized, resemblance. The similarity comes to an abrupt end with the Denial of Guilt, wherein Adam continues to be depicted sexless, but Eve is endowed with conspicuous signs of femininity: breasts, sometimes nipples. My argument is that the pictorial approach to the prelapsarian human body, as opposed to its postlapsarian gendered appearance, is to be sought in the Greek *catenae*, the collection of exegetical fragments attached to particular verses of the Bible. As Eve's tale is intimately interwoven with that of Adam, the analysis occasionally refers to both figures.

A condensed formula, representing the temptation of Eve and Adam, the Fall, and the personages hiding their nudity, is found mainly in Early Christian funerary works of art, where the man and the woman, their loins covered by fig leaves, stand on either side of the tree on which the snake is coiled. The earliest such example is a mural in the *arcosolium* of the Dura Europos baptistery, dated prior to 257.³ The Good Shepherd, portrayed in the middle of the composition, and juxtaposed to the

¹ Hutter (1984), 164–165.

² Kazhdan (1990), 91–105. See also Barbara Zeitler's article treating mainly male nudity; Zeitler (1999), 185–201.

³ Crippa and Zibawi (1998), 72, fig. 62.

scene of the Fall, carries a typological sense; death was introduced into the world through the original sin, but divine grace is offered through the allegory of the Good Shepherd and the sacrament of baptism.⁴ The poor state of preservation of the wall painting does not allow us to see whether Eve has sexual signs.

The iconographic scheme gained great popularity throughout the early Christian world;⁵ it suffices to point out one Western and one Eastern example. Very similar depictions occur on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, dated 359, where Eve's body, treated in a classical style, displays visible and voluminous breasts,⁶ and on a fifth-century floor mosaic fragment, perhaps from a church at Maaut el-Na'aman in northern Syria, preserved today in the Cleveland Museum of Art. The mosaic represents both the Fall and the Denial of Guilt. Depicted full length like Adam, Eve hides her nudity under a large fig leaf, but her nipples are bared. The panel carries a Greek inscription that translates as: "And they ate, [and they] were made naked" (Fig. 1).⁷

Another, more extensive formula appears in early Christian illuminated Books of Genesis depicting a narrative cycle, as exemplified in the fifth-century Cotton Genesis, probably executed in Alexandria.⁸ The manuscript, badly damaged in a fire in 1731, has only a few legible miniatures; other scenes have been reconstituted on the basis of the thirteenth-century mosaics of the south narthex cupola in the Cathedral of San Marco in Venice, which are believed to draw on the early manuscript.⁹ The recension of the Cotton Genesis influenced not only Byzantine but also Western works of art, especially the Bibles from Tours dated ca. 850,¹⁰ and the Salerno ivories, dated 1058–1085.¹¹

The Octateuchs, which constitute the visual core of our discussion, also present a narrative formula of the Creation cycle, possibly drawing on earlier illuminated Bibles such as the Cotton Genesis. Two of the manuscripts—Laurent (Florence, Bibl. Medic. Laurent., cod. Plut. 5.38)

⁴ Grabar (1979), 42.

⁵ For an exhaustive survey of this scheme in Early Christian art see also the author's Ph.D. dissertation (2001), 62–93, esp. 63–66 (unpublished).

⁶ Wilpert (1932), vol. II, pl. XIII. See also the discussion in Struthers Malbon (1990), 53–69, esp. 59–65, fig. 16.

⁷ Crippa and Zibawi (1998), 262, fig. 226.

⁸ Weitzmann and Kessler (1986), 3–7, 125–126, 130.

⁹ Demus (1984), 105–117, 143–147, pls. 123–130.

¹⁰ Kessler (1977), 34.

¹¹ Bergman (1980), 10–15.

and Vat. gr. 747 (Vatican City, Bibl. Apost. Vat.)—are dated ca. 1050; the other three—Ser. (Istanbul, Topkapi Sarayi Lib., cod. G. I. 8); the now lost Sm. (Smyrna [Izmir], Evang. School Lib., cod. A. 1); and Vat. gr. 746 (Vatican City, Bibl. Apost. Vat.)—belong to the twelfth century.¹² It should be noted that the Creation cycle in Vat. gr. 747 was extensively repainted by a Paleologan artist ca. 1280,¹³ thus bringing its style closer to that of the three twelfth-century Octateuchs.

All the Octateuchs depict the Creation of Eve (Gen. 2:21–22) in a similar way. On the left Adam is seated on the ground, giving the animals names; on the right, Eve emerges from his right side while he sleeps,¹⁴ her hands outstretched toward the divine hand emitting golden rays from heaven and giving her the breath of life (Fig. 2).¹⁵ In Laurent., fol. 6r, the arrangement of the scenes is slightly different; the Naming of the Animals and the Creation of Eve are arranged in two superposed registers.¹⁶ Two features are pertinent to our discussion: the asexualized body of Eve and the facial resemblance of the two personages—young, delicate, and angelic-like in expression.

The asexualized representation of Eve in the Octateuchs contrasts with pre-iconoclastic depictions, such as may have appeared in the Cotton Genesis, where the extraction of the rib and Eve's creation most probably constituted one image.¹⁷ We can gather some idea of the sexualized representation from the mosaic in San Marco and the Salerno ivory, both dependent on the Cotton Genesis recension. In San Marco Eve is endowed with voluminous breasts and her pubis is emphasized by dark brown *tesserae* (Fig. 3).¹⁸ In the Salerno ivory, the Creation of Eve conforms more to the scheme in the Octateuchs: the composition showing her emergence from Adam's side is similar, but her sexualized body is different.¹⁹ On the other hand, Byzantine ivory caskets carved with the Creation cycle show an asexualized image of Eve, similar to that in the Octateuchs, as can be seen in the panel of the eleventh/

¹² For discussion of these manuscripts and their imperial provenance, see Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 330–341.

¹³ Fols. 22v, 24r–24v, 25r; Hutter (1972), 140, 143–144.

¹⁴ For discussion of this iconography, particular to Byzantine art, see below, 9–11.

¹⁵ Vat. gr. 747, fol. 22r; Ser., fol. 42v; Sm., fol. 12v; Vat. gr. 746, fol. 37r; Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 31–33, and figs. 79–82. The miniature in Ser. is accompanied by the legend: ἐκ πλευρᾶς ᾧδε πλάσιν εὐας μοι νόει (Thus, Eve is fashioned from the rib).

¹⁶ Ibid., fig. 5 (second register, on the far left).

¹⁷ Fol. 8v; Weitzmann and Kessler (1986), 54.

¹⁸ Demus (1984), vol. II, 113–14, pls. 34, 121.

¹⁹ Bergman (1980), 20, fig. 5.

twelfth-century box preserved in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 4).²⁰ We may conjecture that the absence of sexual characteristics in the Octateuchs reflects a post-iconoclastic iconographical approach.

The episode of the Fall (Gen. 3:1–6) comprises three scenes, reading from left to right: the Temptation, Eve persuading Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, and Adam eating it. In some of the miniatures the painting is extensively flaked; only in those of Ser. and Vat. gr. 746, identical in composition, is the scene preserved intact (Fig. 5).²¹

The image represents the snake in a camel-like form—the viper crouching on the animal’s back—a depiction that draws on the Hebrew midrash.²² It whispers in the ear of Eve, who stands next to the tree, ready to pluck the fruit, as the inscription outside the red frame in the left margin indicates: “ὄφις γυναικὶ ψηθυρισμὸν προσάγει” (the serpent presents the woman with the temptation).²³ Next Eve is shown conversing with Adam, an episode narrated only in the pseudoepigraphic literature.²⁴ On the right Adam accepts the fruit Eve is handing to him, as the legend accompanying these images says: “βρώσιν ἄδαμ δίδωσιν ἥν εὗα φαγεῖν” (the man eats what Eve gives to him).²⁵ The treatment of Adam’s and Eve’s bodies, even if still classical, shows a compromise between a classical corporeal volume and a slight “abstraction” of it—without it being distorted or deformed—a pictorial approach that we can term “moderately ascetic.” The bodies are delicately drawn, elongated, and exquisitely modeled, any hint of sexual organs being omitted. The coloring is pale, characteristic of femininity.²⁶ The delicate faces are relatively small; both figures have long, curled hair. Whereas the ivory

²⁰ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann (1979), vol. I, 48, pl. XLVII, 67a. A number of Byzantine ivory caskets dated to the tenth/eleventh century faithfully follow this iconographical formula: St. Petersburg, Hermitage; Darmstadt, Landesmuseum; Lyon, Musée du Palais des Arts (ibid., vol. I, 49–50, fig. 68a; 59, fig. 69a; 50, fig. 70, respectively).

²¹ Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 35, 36, and figs. 84, 86, respectively. The poor state of preservation of this scene in Laurent., fol. 6r (ibid., 33, fig. 5), Vat. gr. 747, fol. 22v (ibid., 34, fig. 83), and Sm., fol. 13r (ibid., 35, fig. 85) makes any conclusions regarding Eve’s sexual organs conjectural. But in Vat. gr. 747 the black contour of Eve’s right breast is still visible on the far right. Given that Sm. belongs to the same recension as Ser. and Vat. Gr. 746, we can fairly safely assume that the image was identical.

²² Satan’s occasional appearance in the scene of the Temptation in the form of a serpent and camel draws on both rabbinic literature and Christian pseudoepigraphy; Weitzmann-Bernabò (1999), 33, nn. 2–6.

²³ The same inscription appears in Ser.

²⁴ Weitzmann-Bernabò (1999), 34–35, nn. 1–4.

²⁵ The same inscription appears in Ser.

²⁶ Boardman (1989), 130.

plaque of Salerno, which reduces the three episodes to two, continues to represent a gendered Eve in the scene of the Fall,²⁷ the Cleveland ivory casket is consistent in the sexless representation.²⁸

When we move to the scene of God's reprimand and the couple covering their nudity (Gen. 3:8), the miniatures show a dramatic change—Eve is differentiated from Adam: she is gendered. The couple sits on one or two small mounds facing each other, their hands placed on their bodies in a *Venus pudica* pose. Their loins are covered by girdles made of fig leaves. Eve is on the left and Adam on the right; they are listening as God, embodied by the hand emerging from a segment of heaven and emitting golden rays, speaks to them. Adam's chest is delineated by two undulating black lines, but Eve's breasts are prominent, the delicate modeling emphasizing their form (Figs. 6 and 7).²⁹ The Tree of Knowledge stands behind or between the couple.³⁰

The eleventh-century Vat. gr. 747 represents the Denial of Guilt (Gen. 3:9–13) in a separate miniature. Both personages, their loins covered with leafy girdles, try to hide from God, who addresses them separately, golden rays emanating from His hand in the heavenly segment above. Adam and Eve are both young; their bodies finely modeled. Here Eve's breasts are endowed with visible nipples, and Adam's hair is visibly shorter, as befits a man. Adam gestures with his left hand toward Eve, while she points her right index finger at the snake as the guilty one (Fig. 8).³¹ Indeed, the snake, still coiled on the tree, is an indication that the scene refers only to the Denial of Guilt. The other Octateuchs combine the Denial of Guilt with the Punishment, and the composition is slightly different, as, for example, in Vat. gr. 746, fol. 41v

²⁷ Bergman (1980), 20–21, fig. 5.

²⁸ Goldschmidt and Weitzmann (1979), 48, pl. XLVII, 67b. An identical rendering of the body can be seen in the ivory casket preserved in St. Petersburg, Hermitage (ibid., 49, pl. XLVIII, 68b).

²⁹ Vat. gr. 747, fol. 23v and Vat. gr. 746, fol. 40v; Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 36, figs. 87, 90, respectively. For the miniatures of the same scene in Ser., fol. 46v and Sm., fol. 13v see ibid., 36, figs. 88, 89, respectively. In Laurent. the color is badly flaked (ibid., 36, fig. 5g). In Ser. and Vat. gr. 746 the legend in the left margins of the miniature reads: φύλλα συκῆς ἔρρασαν εἰς σκέπην μόνα (they sewed fig leaves to cover [their genitals]).

³⁰ This detail is not mentioned in the LXX, which simply locates Adam and Eve among the trees of paradise. But rabbinic and Syrian exegetical sources mention that they hid behind a fig tree. Genesis Rabbah XV: 7; Neusner (1985), vol. I, 167. See also Levene (1951), 78, 155–56. In fact, in Laurent. and Vat. gr. 747 the couple is seated behind a fig tree.

³¹ Vat. gr. 747; Weitzmann-Bernabò (1999), 37, fig. 91.

(Fig. 9).³² Adam, calm, stands in a frontal position, whereas Eve is apparently trying to hide from God, whose hand emerges from a blue segment of heaven. The serpent advances on its belly, already pointing to the next episode—the curse. The gestural and emotional play shown in the previous image is repeated.³³ Above the miniature appears the inscription “κρύψις, ἔλεγχος, κλήσις ἐκ τοῦ δεσπότης” (hiding-place, reproach, call of the Lord).³⁴

The origins of the peculiar prelapsarian similarity between Eve and Adam and Eve’s postlapsarian gendered representation are to be sought in the Greek *catenae*. The Septuagint Genesis 1:26 follows the Bible closely with respect to Adam’s creation: “Let us make man according to our image and likeness” (נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוּתֵנוּ); but it changes the Hebrew singular of Genesis 2:18: “אֶעֱשֶׂה לּוֹ עֹזֵר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ” into the plural “...let us make for him a help suitable to him,” thus harmonizing the creation of the woman with that of the man.

The implied resemblance drew the Church Fathers’ attention and incited them to endow the episode with Christological meaning.³⁵ Thus, for instance Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 359–428) argues that since God employed similar words for the creation of man and of woman, it is evident that He meant them to be created alike, therefore equal:

So that the woman would not be designed like something of posterior and of superfluous...he placed the same word (“let us make” concerning God in order to show that having known the one-ness of the nature of the man and the woman, He lavished precisely also the same care on their creation.... He placed the words “let us make” in the same way there too (“it is not good that the man should be alone”), since what concerns teaching was also necessary for the woman, since she was his help.³⁶

³² Laurent., fol. 6r (4th register, left); Vat. gr. 747, fol. 24r; Ser., fol. 47r; Sm., fol. 15r (ibid., 37–38, figs. 5, 91–94).

³³ For the following episodes of the creation cycle, which are not pertinent for our discussion here, see the author’s Ph.D. dissertation (2001), 75–78.

³⁴ The same inscription appears in Ser.

³⁵ Certain Christian exegetes thought that the plural “let us make” alluded to the Son or the Trinity, as in *The Cave of Treasures* II, 3: “*Faisons l’homme à notre image, comme notre ressemblance, indiquant par cette (lettre) nun, au lieu de alaf, les glorieuses personnes du Fils et de l’Esprit*”; Ri (1987), vol. I, 6. The extant version of the Syrian text was written at the beginning of the sixth century, and is based on a text compiled in ca. 350 by an Ephremian school (ibid., XII–XVIII).

³⁶ Petit (1991), G 281, vol. I, 193–194. To other fathers of the church, the differentiation was added in the view of physical multiplication, as, e.g., Gregory of Nyssa, *Horn. Opif.* 16 [PG 48:177D]. Origen (*Hom. in Gen.* I, 14) opines that the plural term was intended to justify the benediction accompanied by the command to “multiply” in the

The equality is also implied in the Greek translation of “[a help] suitable to him,” which reads κατ’ αὐτόν, conveying a sense of conformity (κατά) and resemblance, a resemblance given by the adjective ὅμοιος αὐτῷ (“like to himself”), which appears in verse 20. The Greek gloss contrasts with the Hebrew text, which is more concrete “עֶזֶר כְּנִגְדּוֹ” (help meet for him).³⁷

Furthermore, the term “likeness” of Genesis 1:26, rendered in Greek by ὁμοίωσις evokes, according to the Platonic tradition, identification with God.³⁸ This is emphasized by Christian exegetes such as Origen (c. 185–c. 254), who makes a distinction between the divine image, *eikon*, and the divine likeness, *homoiosis*,³⁹ and Gregory of Nyssa (c. 330–c. 395).⁴⁰ Man is the “image of image,” that is Logos.⁴¹ But essentially it is the image of Christ that is the “image of God” and man is solicited to put on this “heavenly image.”⁴² Thus Adam/man is similar both to the divine image and to the image of future humanity.⁴³ As for Eve, she is likened to Adam, an idea affirmed in Genesis 1:27: “And God made man according to the image of God He made him, male and female He made them.” The verse’s meaning is developed further in the chain of Theodore of Mopsuestia, woman’s similarity to man being underscored, implying the similarity of the woman to the divine image:

The wholeness which is the woman, and which was generated from him (Adam),... shows quite simply how the substance of men is already in the male, and it is obvious that He did not allow that the woman should be of another substance, but that she should be precisely of the same substance as the man, because for all single living beings the substance of the female and the male is as one.⁴⁴

next verse, this although the woman had not even been created; Doutreleau (1976), 64–65. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations from the *Patrologia Graeca* are mine.

³⁷ Harl (1986), vol. 1, 105. The Hebrew midrash adopts a quasi-literal interpretation of the term, according to which the woman was created to help the man; Teugels (2000), 120–122.

³⁸ See the seminal article by Ladner (1953), 1–34.

³⁹ *De Principiis* III, 6, 1; Crombie (1869), vol. 1, 262–264.

⁴⁰ *De Prof Christ.* (PG 48:244–245).

⁴¹ Van der Hoek (2000), 66–67.

⁴² Col. 1:15; I Cor. 15:49; Harl (1986), 96. On this topic see also Thunberg (1985), vol. I, 291–312.

⁴³ Laplace and Daniélou (1943), 23–24, 48–59.

⁴⁴ Petit (1991), G 302, vol. 1, 207. Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373) reiterates the idea, claiming that male and female were perfectly united in the body of Adam/man: Eccl. XXXV:2; Beck (1960), 70.

Given that Eve resembles Adam, who in turn was created according to the divine image, the woman too will be in the image of God. This resemblance appears at the moment of creation. It was suggested, for example, by Apollinarius of Laodicaea (c. 310–c. 390), who, when speaking of Eve and her resemblance to God, used the terms *προσηοίκος* and *οἰκειότες*,⁴⁵ meaning among others intimacy between man and God.⁴⁶

An additional dimension emerges in John Chrysostom's chain (c. 347–407), which declares that since before the Fall the first couple were in a transcendental, blessed situation, being above all physical needs and interests, and lived as if in heaven,⁴⁷ they were therefore angelical.

Sexual differentiation is clearly suggested in the Septuagint, Genesis 2:22–24: “And God formed the rib [...] into a woman, [...]; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of her husband.”⁴⁸ However, as an anonymous *catenae* fragment puts it, the image of Eve's creation in the Octateuchs indicates that the Byzantine artist sought his sources in the exegetical texts dealing with the likeness of the woman to the man and their equality, and translated this notion into a physical resemblance displaying angelic, even effeminate, sexless traits. The identical rendering of the man and the woman at the prelapsarian stage reflects the idea of equality between man and woman, whereas the lack of any sexual characteristics indicates their closeness to the divine image, and their angelic-like prelapsarian appearance.

The creation of Eve from the rib of the sleeping Adam similarly acquired a Christological meaning, since Adam's sleep corresponds not only to a prophetic ecstasy, but also to “... the Passion of Christ, just as the ecstasy and the sleep of Adam, which took place for the forming of his wife. For the Church, also, was formed by the Passion of the Lord, and this is the Virgin joined to him as one spirit, just as Eve was joined to Adam in one flesh.”⁴⁹ This is the typological creation of Eve prefiguring the birth of the Church, emerging from the breast of the crucified Christ, an idea rendered in Byzantine art by a specific iconography in which Eve emerges from Adam's right side.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Devreesse (1959), 130.

⁴⁶ Lampe (1965), vol. 4, 938.

⁴⁷ *Gen. Hom.* XVI (PG 53:126B).

⁴⁸ Using the term “*γυνή*” the Greek loses the Hebrew word play, which derives the term “אשה” from man, “איש”.

⁴⁹ Anonymous fragment; Petit (1995), G 1170, vol. 3, 172.

⁵⁰ The combination of both creations is suggested in various exegetical Syrian writings, among them those of Ephrem the Syrian; Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 32–33. In

Finally, the Church Fathers understand Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall be one flesh," as an annunciation of marriage, which will take place only after the Fall. The verse is later repeated in the New Testament in Christ's answer "on the question of divorce" and to describe the marriage of Christ and the Church.⁵¹ Contradicting the Jewish midrash, according to which in prelapsarian paradise Adam and Eve consummated their marriage, this being the cause of the snake's passion,⁵² Christian exegetes, following Paul, contest this notion, and claim that the marriage of the first couple was to take place only after the Fall.⁵³ In fact, it is the scene of the Denial of Guilt, which introduces a visible change in the image of the couple.⁵⁴ The man and the woman, wearing leafy girdles, face each other; in the background or between them is the Tree of Knowledge. The tree signifies their blessed, prelapsarian state, when the couple was one physical, psychic, and spiritual entity. But, it also attests to a disruptive condition, the acknowledgment of nudity, and henceforth of human "misery."⁵⁵ It is the acknowledgment, corresponding to the opening of the eyes,⁵⁶ that reveals the couple's true situation, as Serapion of Thmuis formulates it: "they realized that they were naked [...] their disobedience signified their nature to them."⁵⁷

Moreover, the acknowledgment of nudity, "and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons to go round them" (Gen. 3:8b), was interpreted by Eastern exegetes in various ways. It is the knowledge of the loss of the glorious garments of paradise; recognition of sexual

Laurent., Eve emerges from Adam's left side. This iconography most probably draws on a Syriac exegesis according to which Eve was at this stage already created, meaning that it is the Church that emerges from Adam's side (*ibid.*, 32–33, nn. 4, 6).

⁵¹ Matth. 19:5; Mark 10:7–8; Eph. 5:29–32; Alexandre (1988), 288–290.

⁵² "Said R. Josua b. Qorha, 'It serves to let you know the sin that wicked [creature] had got them to do. When he saw that they were having sexual relations, and he lusted after [the woman] [he tried to kill Adam by getting him to sin].'" Genesis Rabbah XVIII, 6; Neusner (1985), vol. I, 189, 196. For the marriage in paradise see Genesis Rabbah XVIII, 1 (*ibid.*, 196).

⁵³ See, e.g., Theodore of Mopsuestia; Petit (1991), G 353, vol. 1, 239.

⁵⁴ On the mythical sources of the Fall story, see Graves and Patai (1964), 78–81; Benjamin (1997), 38–58.

⁵⁵ Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymnes sur le Paradis* III, 6, 5; VII, 2, 6; Lavanant and Graffin (1968), 55, 95. See also Kronholm (1978), 97.

⁵⁶ It should be noted that both Jewish and Christian traditions see the opening of the eyes in a spiritual sense; these are the soul's eyes that open; Alexandre (1988), 302–303.

⁵⁷ Serapion of Thmuis; Petit (1991), G 352, vol. 1, 238–239.

desire; acceptance of needs linked to practical life and, consequently, the abandoning of the divine contemplative life; the awakening of the intelligence expressed by the invention of the arts; or the symbol of the body's death. Some exegetes discuss the problem from a pessimistic or ascetic angle, but most of them prefer a positive aspect, according to which the aftermath of the Fall was the invention of techniques, the origin of the first civilization, and of human progress. Man knew he was naked; therefore he was constrained to discover science and techniques, whose origin is divine.⁵⁸

Indeed, the sexualized form that Eve's body assumes, and the emphasis on her breasts, corresponds precisely to this mortal-human nature. From then on, Adam and Eve were gendered, identified by their sexual appearance, the sign of different configurations of the human being. The new nudity, stripped of divine grace, was therefore natural and sexualized.

The history of Adam and Eve pursues its typological course in the Denial of Guilt, and the parallel between the sin and Christ's Passion. Serapion of Thmuis declares that the denial occurred in the afternoon, at the same moment that the Savior endured his Passion, thus making Adam a prefiguration of Christ's incarnation.⁵⁹

The snake too bears a typological meaning. The Greek version of Genesis 3:16: "And I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed, he shall watch against thy head, and thou shalt watch against his heel," is not altogether clear. While the first half of the verse is evidently addressed to the serpent, the masculine pronoun "he" cannot refer to "seed," the Greek word for "seed" (*Σπέρμα*) in the translation of Genesis 3:15, being neuter. The difference between the Hebrew masculine and the Greek neuter established a disparity carrying significant consequences for the understanding of the verse's second half, and the pronoun gave rise to a messianic interpretation. This, according to Ephrem the Syrian, is the annunciation of the woman's Son, Christ; He who will dominate the Adversary.⁶⁰ Ephrem includes this interpretation in his exegesis:

...after the end of times, those which I fixed regarding you [Adam and Eve], so that you will be exiled in the land of maledictions, I will send

⁵⁸ For a definition of both attitudes and their development in patristic writings in Early Christianity, see Harl (1966), 486–495.

⁵⁹ Petit (1991), *G* 355, vol. 1, 240–241.

⁶⁰ Alexandre (1988), 314–315; Harl (1986), 109.

my Son; he will come down for your salvation and will live in the Virgin, and by my Son your salvation will be accomplished.⁶¹

Serapion of Thmuis connects the term “seed” with the Virgin Mary, the new Eve, who will bring forth the Savior: “...and in fact it is not the woman who has the seed, but the man. How then can this be said to the woman? It is clear that it is in connection with Christ that the Holy Virgin brought forth without seed.”⁶²

In fact, the Christological meaning attached to Eve is reinforced by her typological maternity. As we have seen, it is precisely at the moment of the curse—“I will greatly multiply thy pains and thy groanings; in pain thou shalt bring forth children...”—transmitted by the rays emanating from heaven, that the breasts, the sign of motherhood, appear in the illustrations. The artist’s intention was probably to emphasize, through Eve’s new sexualized nudity, this typological motherhood, which is both Marian and sacramental, since Eve, as said above, also represents the figure of the Church. She brings forth the race of the regenerated and the faithful.⁶³ Didymos the Blind (c. 313–398) writes in the *Octateuch catenae* in connection with the typological maternity of Eve:

Like Eve who brings forth with pain, the Church brings forth with pain, because virtue is costly and pain results in an irrevocable conversion for the sake of salvation.⁶⁴

Further, he interprets the movement of the woman toward the man rendered by the Hebrew term “*teshuqah*” (desire, impulse) in verse 16, translated accordingly in the Septuagint,⁶⁵ as that of the Church toward her husband, Christ, their marriage,⁶⁶ and the engenderment of the faithful.⁶⁷

In this context, it is important to note Eve’s ability to conceive, stressed later in verse 20, where the Hebrew “*hawwah*”⁶⁸ is translated

⁶¹ *The Cave of Treasures* V, 7–9; Ri (1987), vol. I, 16–18.

⁶² Petit (1991), *G* 400, vol. 1, 264. We should note that the Christological typology of Eve-Church is equally discussed by Procopius of Gaza in relation to Gen. 3:16; *Comm. Gen.* (PG 87/I: 217 D).

⁶³ Daniélou (1950), 37–44, esp. 38.

⁶⁴ Petit (1991), *G* 409, vol. 1, 269.

⁶⁵ Harl (1986), 109–110.

⁶⁶ John Hanson thinks that the Adamic theme on Middle Byzantine ivory caskets can convey a marital meaning; Hanson (2000), 182–183.

⁶⁷ Severian of Gabala (active ca. 400) also claims likewise that the theme conveys a messianic and baptismal interpretation of verse 3:16; Petit (1991), *G* 407, vol. 1, 268.

⁶⁸ Gen. 3:20 explains that the name “Eve” means “mother of all living”.

into the Greek Ζωή (life), to reproduce the etymological play between Eve's Hebrew name and the notion of life.⁶⁹ Eve's name is also interpreted in a literal sense, as related to her womanly-gestational role. Thus, Apollinarios, bishop of Laodikeia (c. 310–c. 390), commenting on Eve, ascribes her names, respectively, to her origin, ἄνδρις and to her motherhood, ἑύα.⁷⁰ She being the “mother of all beings,” as Theodore of Mopsuestia puts it, he argues that the task was bestowed upon her through the “divine kindness,” thus acknowledging Eve's positive role in Christological economy.⁷¹

And what other similar knowledge have we of the divine kindness? It is indeed obvious that Adam was unable to know that the whole human race would be generated by the succession, and that she would be the mother of all; and she, by whom in the beginning all men were generated, as well as successively other women, who were to generate men, as this one (Eve) did.⁷²

In conclusion, although the numerous patristic sources generally contain invective against Eve,⁷³ it appears that this negative approach is not reflected in the visual material discussed in this essay. The changes seen in depictions of the first couple's nudity reflect the positive attitude of the *catenae* attached to the pertinent verses of the Creation cycle, according to which the Fall episode should be an incentive to ponder the condition of man and his salvation. Consequently, Eve's nudity is not condemned, as in Western medieval art,⁷⁴ but rather valorized. The three principal

⁶⁹ Harl (1986), 110.

⁷⁰ Devreesse (1958), 130. See also Procopius of Gaza, *Com. Gen.* (PG 87/I:217 C).

⁷¹ The term “economy” comes from the Greek *oikonomia* (lit. “husbandry”). It is used among others to designate that component of doctrine dealing with the divine plan of salvation or incarnation history; s.v. “*oikonomia*,” *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* (1991), 1516.

⁷² Petit (1991), G 434, vol. 1, 281.

⁷³ The assimilation of Eve's imperfect nature and her sexuality as the starting point of all that is evil is early enunciated by Philo, *Quaest. in Gen.* I, 43: “It was the more imperfect and ignoble element, the female, that made a beginning of transgression and lawlessness, while the male made the beginning of reverence and modesty and all good, since he was better and more perfect.” Marcus (1953), vol. 11, 25. The negative attitude toward Eve was later adopted by certain Eastern fathers, who referred to the snake's satanic nature and the fact that Eve cooperated with it; cf. Eusebius of Emesa, died c. 359; Devreesse (1958), 60–61, whereas in the midrash Eve is rather the snake's victim; Boyarin (1997), 36. On this topic see also Galatariotou (1984–85), 60–62.

⁷⁴ The literature on this subject is extensive; I cite only some of the more important works: Werckmeister (1972), 1–30; Hieatt, (1975), 221–226; D'Alverny (1977), 105–129; Kraus (1982), 79–99; Miles (1989), esp. 85–117.

ideas illustrated in depictions of the prelapsarian state of the couple—the spiritual identity with God, the Christological typology linked to the creation of the couple, and the absence of any prelapsarian sexual relations—are rendered by a “quasi-ascetic” approach. Although varying in degree, Eve’s nudity is characterized by a concern to desexualize the feminine body by eliminating any traits likely to suggest sex, passion, and the like. Eve’s feminine particularities appear with the Denial of Guilt and the Punishments, symbolizing her typological maternity, both Marian and sacramental. Her role in the economy of salvation is capital; she brings forth the race of the regenerated and the faithful, as a fragmentary chain on Genesis 3:20 attributed to Theodoret of Chyrrus (c. 393–c. 466) eloquently sums it up: “Eve is the Church and Adam is Christ, and they give life as Christ gives the life of grace.”⁷⁵

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⁷⁵ Petit (1991), G 435, 281–282.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Floor mosaic: Adam and Eve. Byzantium, Northern Syria, fifth-century, marble tesserae, 142.9 × 107.3 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1969.115.
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SILENUS AMONG THE JEWS?
ANTI-JEWISH POLEMICS IN NINTH-CENTURY BYZANTINE
MARGINAL PSALTERS*

Emma Maayan-Fanar

In her book *The Image of the Jew in Byzantine Art*,¹ Elisheva Revel-Neher showed that the image of the Jew in Byzantium was fundamentally different from that in the West. Portrayals of Byzantine Jews do not display overt signs of hatred and are commonly characterized by objects that reflect real Jewish life, such as *tefillin* and *tallit*. Caricatures of Jews are rare and in fact exist only in the ninth-century marginal Psalters, namely the Chludov Psalter (Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129) and the Pantocrator Psalter (Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, Pantocrator, cod. 61).² These predate occurrences of caricatures of Jews in Western art, which only began to appear in the thirteenth century.

The illuminations of the Chludov and Pantocrator Psalters have been studied extensively. A detailed analysis of their polemical and typological character was undertaken by Kathleen Corrigan,³ who suggests that they represent the visual aspect of the anti-Jewish polemics that flourished from the early days of Christianity. Expressed in the *Adversus Judaeos* literature, anti-Jewish polemics became especially relevant in anti-iconoclastic writings.⁴ In another article, Corrigan concentrates on caricatures of the Jews showing that there are basically two types, both employed in the marginal Psalters to make the evil character of the Jews intensely clear: the “Semitic” type, figures depicted in profile

* I am grateful to Mati Meyer for her valuable comments on this chapter.

¹ Revel-Neher (1992).

² The miniatures of the Chludov Psalter were published in a facsimile edition: Ščepkina (1977). A set of the miniatures of the Pantocrator Psalter can be found in Dufrenne (1966) and Pelekanidis, Christou, Mauropoulou-Tsioumis, Kadas, Katsarou (1979), hereafter: *Treasures III*.

³ Corrigan (1992).

⁴ The long lapse of time is explained by Corrigan as a deliberate revival of the old anti-Jewish argumentation for use against other enemies, especially the iconoclasts; Corrigan (1992), 61; Brubaker (1993), 181–182. Paul Speck in his *Ich bin's nicht* lists texts circulating in Byzantium in the post-iconoclastic period that blamed the “others” for Iconoclasm; Speck (1990).

with an exaggerated physiognomy, and the “Silenic” type, based on the ancient iconography of Silenus.⁵

The anti-iconoclastic polemics in the two manuscripts have generally been considered equivalent in character, message, and effect. The present study suggests that whereas in most aspects the scenes of the Chludov and Pantocrator Psalters largely correspond and they apparently use common pictorial sources, the manuscripts differ somewhat in their representation of Jews. In the Chludov Psalter Jews are associated with pagans, both being similarly caricatured. In the Pantocrator Psalter the Jews are treated as a distinct and hostile group, thus emphasizing a specifically anti-Jewish attitude. Although the doings of iconoclasts and Jews are evidently equated in the two manuscripts and in some cases iconoclasts are even identified with Jews by an inscription,⁶ images of iconoclasts, also caricatural, belong to another type of caricature.⁷ I attempt to show that the nuances in the depiction of Jews in the two Psalters reflect these variant intentions. The discussion may also shed some light on the problem of dating the two manuscripts, a problem widely debated and still unsolved.⁸

Both Psalters depict numerous Jewish figures, usually identified by the caption or the theological context of the scene. There is a clear distinction between the representation of Jews in “historical” scenes,⁹ for example, the Exodus from Egypt and the Wandering in the Desert (illustrating Ps. 77, 105),¹⁰ and in scenes of typological and polemical content, taken mainly from the New Testament. In various ways the latter reflect not only anti-Jewish, but also anti-iconoclastic, polemics.

⁵ Corrigan (1998), 351–360. On the Jewish caricatural types see there, 353. Suzy Dufrenne was the first to distinguish the two types; Dufrenne (1965), 94.

⁶ E.g., Iannis is called the Jew (IANNHΣ...IOYΔAIOI...; Chludov, fol. 35v). The application of the term “Jew” to other enemies of Christian Orthodoxy was prevalent from the days of early Christianity (e.g., Nestorius was called “the new Jew” during the Council of Ephesus). In the Acts of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 the iconoclasts were described as “godless Jews and enemies of truth”; Cameron (1996), 269.

⁷ The iconoclasts, especially in the Chludov Psalter, are closely associated with images of devils. Compare, e.g., the depiction of Iannis (Chludov, fol. 35v) with that of the demon on the same folio.

⁸ The Chludov Psalter may have been illuminated at the time of Patriarch Methodius (843–847), i.e., directly after the Iconophile triumph. The Pantocrator Psalter, of a more erudite character, has been ascribed either to Methodius’s period or to that of Photius (858–867; 877–886). On the date of the Psalters see especially: Ševčenko (1965), 52–60; Walter (1987), 217–222; Corrigan (1992), 124–130; Brubaker and Haldon (2001), 44.

⁹ Dufrenne (1965), 94; Corrigan (1998), 353.

¹⁰ The numbering of the Psalms corresponds to the Septuagint usage.

They emphasize the Jewish rejection of the true God, contrapose Moses and Christ, or stress the similarities between Jews and iconoclasts. The present chapter focuses on this last group of scenes.

In some respects both the Chludov and the Pantocrator Psalters follow a well-known representational scheme regarding the image of the Jew that can be traced as far back as the sixth century. For example, Jews are clearly distinguished by their costumes. They are usually depicted wearing long and brightly colored garments, a combination of a long tunic and a heavy mantle with a cowl; their heads are uncovered. This type of dress is close to that of the Jews in the scene of Moses Receiving the Law in the choir mosaic of San Vitale in Ravenna. Similar garments and headdresses¹¹ distinguish the group of Jews from the apostles in the scene of the Resurrection of Lazarus in the Codex Rossanensis, fol. 1r.¹² Such garments were a sign of Jews in late Byzantine art as well. In the eleventh century a further convention developed: the depiction of Jews with their heads covered with a *tallit*-like headpiece or a colorful cowl.¹³ In the marginal Psalters Jews are depicted bare-headed, and the cowl is indicated by an emphasized knot.¹⁴

In the polemical scenes especially, Jews tend to figure as a group. Usually only two, rarely three, personages are shown in full, while the others are sketched behind them. This type of representation can also be traced to the sixth century. In the Codex Rossanensis Jews are pictured watching the miracle of the Resurrection of Lazarus. Only two figures in the group are done in detail: an elderly man with his head covered and a youth with a bare head. Both are in profile, looking toward the

¹¹ Revel-Neher remarks that the representation of the Jewish head covering in art was originally drawing from daily life, Revel-Neher (1992), 73, n. 84; on biblical quotations concerning Jewish dress, historical evidence, and the appearance of *tallit* and *tefillin* in early Christian and Byzantine art, *ibid.*, 51–76.

¹² Rossano, Museo dell'Arcivescovado, Museo diocesano, Plut I. 56; Sevrugian (1990), pl. 4.

¹³ E.g., Gospel book, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, cod. gr. 74, eleventh century, fol. 41r; Octateuch, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 747, eleventh century, fols. 86v, 198v; and Lectionary, Athos, Dionysiou, cod. 587m, eleventh century, fol. 8r; Revel-Neher (1992), 72–75, figs. 31–37, 45.

¹⁴ The illustration on fol. 105r in the Pantocrator Psalter contains a unique element. One of the Jews in the group wears a sort of a tall pointed hat with a long band falling from the top. This type of hat is not known in any other representation of Jews in Byzantine art; its prototype is unclear. As far as I know, this point has not been studied. The object differs from the tall Parthian hat, but in some respects it evokes its Eastern counterpart.

risen Lazarus. Their passive mien speaks to their role as silent witnesses to the miracle.¹⁵

Contrary to such sixth-century representations, however, Jews in the marginal Psalters are by no means passive witnesses, but are rather active antagonists. Appearing as such for the first time on fol. 2r of the Chludov Psalter, they are usually depicted as a group, in contrast to some lone saintly figure. In the Chludov Psalter they are identified by the caption ΑΣΕΒΕΙΣ (without faith); the eleventh-century Barberini Psalter¹⁶ calls them “pestilent.” Whatever the case, they can be easily recognized as Jews by their dress, which is similar to that in other representations of Jews throughout the Psalters.¹⁷

On the other hand, the principal characteristic of Jews in the ninth-century marginal Psalters, and only there, is bodily distortion (Figs. 1–4). The figures are disproportionate and fleshy. Their gestures are wild and violent. Two recurrent types, an older man and a younger one, can be found in almost every group. The younger one is depicted in profile, his large nose, pointed beard, and curly hair emphasized.¹⁸ Though the type of an elderly person had already appeared in the sixth-century depictions of Jews noted above, it is particularly evident in the Psalters. The figure has a disproportionately large head, bald, with two clumps of grayish hair, a broad face, and a short beard. There is no neck, stressing the extreme contortion of the body, which resembles an antique Silenus image. It is this figure, which is not in evidence in Byzantine art of other period or in any Western art, that suggests a caricatural approach to the visual representation of the Jew that had already been established.

A wide variety of anti-Jewish polemical literature was produced beginning in the early Christian period. Jews were reproached for their inability to understand the words of the Bible correctly, for not recognizing the Messiah, and for crucifying the Son of God.¹⁹ So it is all

¹⁵ On Jews as witnesses see St. Augustine, *Sermon 373* (PL 39–1665); Sharf (1995), 20.

¹⁶ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barberini, gr. 372, fol. 6r; Anderson, Canart, Walter (1989), 57.

¹⁷ E.g., Chludov, fols. 54v, 67v, 77r.

¹⁸ This type of caricature is mentioned by André Grabar (1957), 288. Revel-Neher argues that such a caricatural representation of Jews is not found consistently. She also points out that these examples of caricature did not necessarily identify Jewish characters but became a stereotype for heretics and unbelievers; Revel-Neher (1992), 79–80, note 117.

¹⁹ The origins of anti-Jewish polemics can be found as early as the second century, when Christians proclaimed themselves “*Verus Israel*” (*Galatians* 6:16). Barnabas

the more surprising that the visual portrayal of Jews in early Christian, Byzantine, and early Western Medieval art was entirely uninfluenced by these writings and the hostility and vituperation they convey.²⁰

Not until the appearance of the ninth-century Byzantine Psalters were Jews represented in visual polemics. The reason for this may well lie in the anti-iconoclastic character of the manuscripts, as Jews were blamed for the iconoclastic controversy.²¹ Anti-Jewish texts proliferated during the seventh and eighth centuries,²² and although their number decreased in the ninth century,²³ the church authorities of this period continued to quote the earlier texts.²⁴ In this literature one or two “wise” Jews,²⁵ also called “ancient teachers of the law,”²⁶ are contrasted with the true heir, a Christian.²⁷ Since ancient times depictions of the wise have been associated with old age, as in representations of philosophers as

writes: “Be not like those who add to sin...their covenant is ours also. Nay, but it is ours only; for they have lost forever that which Moses received” (*Barnabas* IV.6). The *Adversus Iudaeus* literature reached a climax in the fourth century. Jews were, “Murderers of the Lord, they are murderers of prophets, rebels and full of hatred against God; they commit outrage against the Law, resist God’s grace, repudiate the faith of their fathers. They are confederates of the devil, offspring of vipers, scandal-mongers, slanderers, darkened in mind, leaven of the Pharisees, Sanhedrin of demons, accursed, utterly vile, quick to abuse, enemies of all that is good” (Gregory of Nyssa, *In Christi Resurr. Orat.*, 5 [PG 25:1054]). On this literature see Williams (1935); Simon (1986); Revel-Neher (1992), 18–26; Schreckenberg (1982, 1988); Krauss (1995), 1–51; Limor and Stroumsa (1996).

²⁰ Anti-Jewish imagery appeared in later Western art. On this subject see most recently: Lipton (1999); Higgs Strickland (2003).

²¹ Vasiliev (1955/56), 25–47; Cameron (1996), 269.

²² Cameron (1996), 259–265. The key text according to Cameron is the late-seventh-century *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati*; Cameron (1991), 102. Cameron points out that “disputation literature, polemics against outsider groups—heretics, Jews, and Muslims in particular—all had their uses in this strengthening of ideological boundaries to define a Christian and, for the first time, the Byzantine world,” 107.

²³ For more on anti-Jewish literature from the end of Iconoclasm to the fall of Byzantine Empire, see Krauss (1995), 61–68.

²⁴ Corrigan (1992), 44.

²⁵ E.g., The Dialogue of Papiscus and Philo: “Jews, who were wise men among the Hebrews, with a certain monk concerning the Faith of the Christian and the Law of the Hebrews, held in the presence of an assembly of Christians and Jews”; Williams (1935), 169–174.

²⁶ *Ep. Severi* 21.5; Rutgers (2003), 394.

²⁷ This convention may have been visualized in the ninth century (before 855) *Drogo Sacramentary* from Metz (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. lat. 9428). On fol. 43v an old man is depicted as part of the Crucifixion scene inside the initial “O.” He is on the left of Christ, who holds the globe in his lap. The figure has no precedent. It has been variously identified as a personification of Synagogue, Jerusalem, the Old Law, the defeated prince of the world, Moses, Hosea, Melchisedech and Nicodemus, and in any case as signifying the old order yielding before Christ; Chazelle (2001), 254–266.

aged and bearded men, but in the marginal Psalters the old, wise man is caricatured by being given Silenic features and is contrasted with the young and the new, namely Christianity. Remarkably, this Silenus-like figure is introduced only into groups of Jews confronting Moses or Christ. In such figurations Jews are contrasted to Christ and Moses in age and in facial characteristics. The relatively static figure of Christ (or Moses) stands alone, confronting a group of distorted personages, among them a disproportionately agitated and bald-headed Jew. Scenes of moral intention, such as Christ talking to the rich youth, which appear only in the Chludov Psalter (Ps. 13:2; 52:3–4), depict figures in Jewish dress but without any Silenic features.

Psalm 55 is illustrated by two typologically connected scenes:²⁸ the Arrest of David and the Arrest of Christ. In both the Chludov (fol. 54r) and the Pantocrator (fol. 68v),²⁹ the Silenic characteristics occur only in the latter. The same Silenic figure can be seen in the Chludov Psalter in the scene of Judas's betrayal.³⁰ A clear distinction is made between the Judas and the elderly Silenic figure, each obviously playing a different role in the imagery. In the Pantocrator Psalter, Judas is identified by a caption, whereas in the Chludov he is distinguished by being the only figure in profile in the group.

The Silenic figure appears in both Psalters in several other contexts: in the illumination of Psalm 35:13, relating to John 18:6–7;³¹ Psalm 38:13, referring to Isaiah's prophecy of the arrest of Christ;³² and Psalm 68:28–29,³³ wherein the Pharisees, identified by their Jewish dress, are shown bribing the soldiers at Christ's tomb. The scene of Christ expelling the merchants from the Temple illustrates Psalm 68:10: "For the zeal of thine house has eaten me up..."³⁴ This psalm is quoted in John 2:17. The faces of the merchants are highly expressive, in contrast to the iconic representation of Christ (Fig. 5). However, the costume of the black-haired figure differs from what is commonly perceived in the

²⁸ The representation of these two scenes together is a ninth-century phenomenon, reflecting anti-iconoclastic polemics, and does not exist in the writings of the early Church Fathers; see Corrigan (1992), 48, 170, n. 26.

²⁹ *Treasures III*, fig. 198.

³⁰ Fol. 54r; the Pantocrator Psalter combines the Arrest and Betrayal of Christ.

³¹ Pantocrator, fol. 42v (*Treasures III*, fig. 191); Chludov, fol. 33v.

³² Pantocrator, fol. 48r (*Treasures III*, fig. 193); Chludov, fol. 38r.

³³ Chludov, fol. 67v; Pantocrator, fol. 89r (*Treasures III*, fig. 205).

³⁴ Chludov, fol. 66r; Pantocrator, fol. 87r (*Treasures III*, fig. 204).

Psalter as Jewish dress.³⁵ Once again a link can be made with the Codex Rossanensis, in which the scene of the expulsion of the merchants from the Temple includes an elderly person apparently without a neck whose head is unnaturally turned backward (fol. 2r).³⁶

The Crucifixion scene illustrating Psalm 21:2 contains two distorted figures under the cross, laughing and pointing at it. In the Chludov Psalter (fol. 19r) these figures can be identified as Jews through their dress and the Silenic features of one of them.³⁷ In the Barberini Psalter (fol. 36r) the same figures are clearly identified as Jews by the inscription.³⁸ The twisted head movement is interpreted by Corrigan as a direct reference to the words of Justin Martyr: "All that see me have laughed me to scorn; they said with their lips while they shook their head: he trusted in the Lord; let Him save him..."³⁹ All these scenes are associated with anti-Jewish polemics emphasizing Jewish treachery and rejection of the true God.

Both Psalters contain several scenes of Jews in a confrontation with Moses or Christ.⁴⁰ Psalm 77 has the largest number of such scenes: four in the Chludov Psalter and three in the Pantocrator.⁴¹ Twice Christ is addressing the Jews (vv. 2 and 24–25),⁴² and explaining to them the real meaning of the psalm.⁴³ In the scenes where the Jews are murmuring against Moses,⁴⁴ they are depicted as extremely aggressive; their figures are distorted and they are shown gesticulating wildly at Moses (see Figs. 1 and 4), emphasizing their character as unbelievers and stressing the typological significance of the psalm as the replacement of the Old

³⁵ In the Pantocrator Psalter the elderly merchant wears the conventional "Jewish" garments.

³⁶ Sevrugian (1990), pl. 7.

³⁷ The identification of these figures in the Pantocrator Psalter (fol. 10r) is less clear. Their faces are almost completely effaced and there is no sign of Silenic physiognomy. Suzy Dufrenne identifies these figures as iconoclasts; Dufrenne (1966), 21.

³⁸ Anderson, Canart, Walter (1989), 68.

³⁹ Justin Martyr, *Dialogues with Trypho*, CI (PG 6:712); Corrigan (1992), 48.

⁴⁰ Ps. 55:6, 77:2 (lost in Chludov); 77:24–25; 77:40; 77:56 (does not exist in Pantocrator); 87:40 (lost in Chludov); 105:16–18 (lost in Pantocrator).

⁴¹ Corrigan suggests that the pre-iconoclastic cycles included only the scenes of blessing and the plagues of Egypt. Polemical scenes were introduced only in the ninth-century marginal Psalters; Corrigan (1992), 19.

⁴² The location of this scene in the Pantocrator Psalter is more accurate than in the Chludov, as is the Jews' dress. The scene precedes that of the manna and possibly refers to verse 22: "Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation."

⁴³ This psalm is quoted in Matthew 13:35 and John 6:22–58.

⁴⁴ Ps. 77:40 (Chludov, fol. 77r; Pantocrator, fol. 106v; Dufrenne (1966), pl. 15, and Ps. 77:56 (Chludov, fol. 78r).

Testament by the New.⁴⁵ In all these scenes the Silenic face appears as the principal characteristic of the Jewish group.

In the Chludov Psalter, this elderly Silenic figure grew into a symbol of the Jews as the true enemies of Christ and functions as a means of identification even in the absence of the usual dress. In an illustration of Psalm 21:17,⁴⁶ Christ is depicted surrounded by dog-headed people threatening him with wooden sticks (Fig. 6). Here the figures in fact wear short garments, but they are identified as Jews by an inscription that is now only partly legible.⁴⁷ From a careful look at the figure on the right, it becomes clear that what might at first appear to be a two-headed monster is actually an elderly individual with a round, bald head who is hiding behind a dog-mask, suggesting that the cynocephali on the left are actually wearing masks.

The psalm was typologically interpreted by Paul, who labeled the Jews dogs (Phil. 3:2); this became a common epithet in polemical literature.⁴⁸ The Church Fathers followed Paul's lead.⁴⁹ Justin Martyr explained the verse as a prophecy of Christ's crucifixion and also as a strikingly evident prophetic accusation of the Jews' guilt in connection with it.⁵⁰ In fact, the depiction in the Chludov Psalter indicates that the true nature of a Jew is hidden behind a mask. But what is his true nature? And why indeed was the Silenic face chosen as a sign of Jewishness?

Corrigan suggests that the origins of this Silenic facial appearance are traceable to the mime performances that were mounted to insult political and religious enemies.⁵¹ She also contends that the negative attitude toward mimes may be the reason for their use as a caricature representing Jews.⁵² While there is some literary evidence of miming performances,⁵³ including several anti-Jewish instances, the closest visual

⁴⁵ Corrigan (1992), 52.

⁴⁶ Fol. 19v.

⁴⁷ On the inscription, see Corrigan (1992), 49, n. 32.

⁴⁸ "Death to which the synagogue of the wicked would condemn Him, whom He calls both dogs and hunters..." (Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Trypho*, CIV (PG 6:720); also Theodoret, *Interpret. in Psalm*. (PG 80:1016–1017); Hesychius of Jerusalem, *On the Titles of the Psalms* (PG 27:724).

⁴⁹ Marrow (1977), 170.

⁵⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dial. cum Trypho*, CV, CIV (PG 6:720–721).

⁵¹ Corrigan (1998), 357.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Such performances continued to take place in early Byzantium, but there is almost no evidence of mime spectacles after the sixth century. On the Byzantine theater, see Puchner (2002), 304–326, who argues that there was no organized theater in the middle Byzantine period (Ibid., 323).

comparison goes back to the fourth century BCE.⁵⁴ Massimo Bernabò pointed out the dependence of certain Byzantine visual features on the appearance of characters in ancient plays.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, I think that there is not enough evidence for a positive link between these images and the representations of Jews. Whether these images were influenced by mime performances or not, they were not designed to isolate the Jews by suggesting their particularity, but rather to associate them with other negative conceptual groups depicted in the Psalters. These include Hades, statues of idols, and personifications of rivers and represented the ancient world of pagan images, which ran counter to the new world of Christian imagery or perhaps the restored world of post-iconoclastic imagery. The Silenic figure stresses the notion of the Jews' belonging to this "old" world of non-Christian imagery.

Comparison with Hades, especially in the Chludov Psalter, reveals a strong visual link between the images. Hades is depicted as a huge, neckless, seminude Silenic figure, with a fleshy body (e.g., fol. 8v; Fig. 10). He has a wide face; his head is bald with two clumps of graying hair, and he has a short beard.⁵⁶ An ultimate model for Hades could lie, as proposed by Bernabò, in the comic plays of the ancient theater, specifically in Hades fighting Heracles in Roman *farsae*.⁵⁷ However, the choice of the gluttonous Silenic model seems to be of additional relevance here, emphasizing Hades as a consumer of souls. The physical characteristics, especially the fat belly and advanced age, that identify

⁵⁴ Corrigan (1998), 359.

⁵⁵ I am grateful to Massimo Bernabò for referring me to his articles on this subject (in press). In a lecture given at the Institute of Classical Studies, University of London (March 1, 2005) and at the University of Haifa (May 16, 2005), he identified figures illustrating Psalm 21:8, 17 as actors wearing masks of bulls and dogs; and the merchants expelled from the Temple as comic actors playing the money changer and a slave. The Jewish figures confronting Moses in Ps. 77:40; 87:40–41 (Pantocrator), and 105 (Chludov) and stoning Christ in Ps. 81:6 (Pantocrator), are similarly based, according to Bernabò, on figures borrowed from ancient theatrical performances. See also more recently Bernabò (2004), 57–85.

⁵⁶ In Chludov Hades remains the same throughout the manuscript. Though a similar Hades type can be found in Pantocrator on fol. 29r, he is depicted differently elsewhere in the Psalter. On the appearance of Hades in the marginal Psalters, see Maayan-Fanar (2006), 93–108.

⁵⁷ Bernabò (2004), 75. The Eastern Church Fathers knew the texts of tragedy and old comedy. They rejected their content as "idolatry" and even in the twelfth-century, Balsamon, in his commentary on the 62nd canon of the Trullo synod, warns against comic and tragic masks; Puchner (2002), 307.

the ancient Silenus, dominate in the figure of Hades. Turning Hades into Silenus both stresses his carnality and gluttony and ridicules it.⁵⁸

Personifications of rivers, especially the Jordan, also carry Silenic features. The connection between the descent into water during baptism and the descent into Hades is well known.⁵⁹ Baptism indeed was regarded as death and resurrection, rebirth into the new religion—Christianity. These concepts were combined by Paul (Rom. 6:3–11; 10:7), followed by early Christian exegetes.⁶⁰ River personifications are reminiscent of the pagan world and thus belong to the imagery of the past. The artist of the Chludov Psalter seems to have seen the links among all these elements, connecting them visually by means of the aged, fleshy personage. The only distinction between the Silenic figures in those groups and the Jews is their dress. Whereas the personifications are depicted in traditional classical nudity, the Jews wear long heavy garments that cover their bodies completely.

A case in point is the image on fol. 31r in the Chludov Psalter illustrating Psalm 34:5–6: “Let them be as dust before the wind, and an angel of the Lord afflicting them. Let their way be dark and slippery, and an angel of the Lord persecuting them.” Two figures, one of which is depicted as the Hades type, are being pursued by an angel (Fig. 7). This is one of the rare instances where a Silenic head denoting a Jew is combined with a body wearing only a loincloth, which is an attribute of Hades and the river gods. Using nudity out of context, this image combines the identities of personification and Jew. The way of the wicked is contrasted here with the way of God, suggesting that the Silenic figure, wherever it appears, symbolizes the personification of evil. The inscription ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ ΚΥ ΔΙΩΚΩΝ(Ν) ΤΟΥΣ ΑΜΑΡΤΩΛΟΥΣ (angel of God pursuing sinners) links the image and the verse of the psalm. In the Chludov Psalter the Silenic figure thus personifies sin; placed among the figures of Jews confronting Moses and Christ, it identifies them as sinners, thus situating them in the general context of sin and evil.

⁵⁸ Maayan-Fanar (2006), 102–107.

⁵⁹ Daniélou (1964), 225–227.

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Ignatius of Antioch, *Ephesians* 18.2 (*Lettres, Martyre de Polycarpe / Ignace d'Antioche, Polycarpe de Smyrne*, P. T. Camelot, ed., *Sources Chrétiennes* 10 bis (Paris: 1969), 74); Clement of Alexandria, *Excerpts from Theodotus* 81:2 (*Extraits de Théodote*, F. Sagnard, ed., *Sources Chrétiennes* 23 (Paris: 1948), 206); *The Gospel of Philip* 77, M. W. Meyer, ed., *The Nag Hammadi Library in English* (New York: 1977), 146). See also McDonnell (1995), 217.

Notable in this context is the scene of the conversion of Zacchaeus the tax collector (Luke 18:10–14). Zacchaeus is a repentant Jew, who nevertheless is depicted with Silenic features (Fig. 8). This portrayal still puzzles scholars, who point out that in the New Testament narrative Zacchaeus was forgiven by Christ and thus should be shown without signs of Jewishness.⁶¹

In the marginal Psalters,⁶² Zacchaeus would be seen to represent the sin of greed, which Christ is about to overthrow. He thus appears not as a repentant individual but as the personification of a sin. Maria Evangelatou suggests that Zacchaeus together with the images of a forgiven prostitute and the hemorrhaging woman (Matt. 9:20–22) symbolize, respectively, the uprooting of avarice, prostitution, and sickness and forgiveness for the repentant iconoclasts⁶³; this was a ninth-century visual innovation.⁶⁴ Although, as we have seen, the Silenic figure is mostly found in association with Jews, a broader aspect seems to be addressed here.

The figure of Silenus may carry still wider connotations. I have noted elsewhere that these Silenic images have much in common with the representation of Barbarians in Greek and Roman art, notwithstanding the different appearance of their hair.⁶⁵ Traditional Greek ethnocentrism made a sharp distinction between “Greeks” and “others,”⁶⁶ which was adopted in Christian society to distinguish between “Christians” and “others.” This distinction became even more significant after Iconoclasm, when the true Christians, namely the Iconophiles, were contrasted with the whole range of “others,” including their worst enemies, the iconoclasts. The “others” were stereotyped and divided into two basic groups. The first included the immediate opponents of the Iconophiles, the iconoclasts, who shared many visual characteristics with demons and are thus a newly created stereotype of the enemy.⁶⁷ Another type is based on the stereotype of an “other” well known since antiquity, the “barbarian,” which is combined with the ancient Silenus to create a compendium of historical enemies of the Christians, including the Jews.

⁶¹ Corrigan (1992), 169, n. 22. Bernabò suggests that this figure was made in the image of a dwarf.

⁶² Ps. 84:3; Chludov, fol. 84v; Pantocrator, fol. 118r (*Treasures III*, fig. 222).

⁶³ Evangelatou (2002), 162.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 147.

⁶⁵ Maayan-Fanar (1997), ch. 5.

⁶⁶ Coleman (1997), 176.

⁶⁷ E.g., Chludov, fol. 35v.

Comparison between the two Psalters shows that the homogeneity of the “others,” based on a Silenus-like figure, is mainly evident in the Chludov. The Pantocrator, presumably from a later date,⁶⁸ while still copying certain Silenic features, disrupts this sameness, excluding the river personifications and being inconsistent in the depiction of Hades. The Silenic image remains only within the Jewish groups and becomes more schematic, being applied not only to one figure as a symbol but to several of them. It thus becomes more identified with Jews than with any other group. Only in the Pantocrator Psalter, it would seem, do Jews appear as an independent set of enemies, identified not merely by their dress but also and especially by their caricatural physiognomies.

Further comparison between the Chludov and the Pantocrator Psalters reveals more differences in the appearance of the Jews as well as in the choice of scenes. As I noted earlier, the range of scenes that include Jews, with or without Silenic features, is much wider in the Chludov Psalter.⁶⁹ Furthermore, certain differences are evident in the approach to the physical depiction of Jews. The Chludov artist is much more direct in his attitude. His Jewish figures are highly expressive in both physiognomy and body language. The Pantocrator Jews lack individuality; their faces are schematic and almost round; only their hairstyle is not consistent (Fig. 1 cf. Figs. 2 and 3). The approach of the Chludov artist to the portrayal of the Jews thus seems more original and inventive. Moreover, the Pantocrator artist increased the number of Silenic heads in the groups of Jews and added them into scenes where they are absent in the Chludov.⁷⁰

One of the most significant differences between the two manuscripts as regards the subject of this chapter emerges in the illustration to Psalm 81. Instead of illustrating verse 8, which played a key role in the Holy Saturday liturgy with the scene of the Anastasis,⁷¹ as in the Chludov Psalter, the Pantocrator artist preferred verses 2 and 3 (or 6?) (fol. 114v), and depicted the Jews stoning Christ (see Fig. 3). The scene is based on

⁶⁸ See n. 8.

⁶⁹ The Pantocrator Psalter lacks illustrations to Psalms 13:2 and 52:3, 4 (Christ talking to the rich youth); 21:8, 9, and 17 (Christ surrounded by bulls and dogs); 34:5, 6 (Expulsion of sinners); and 77:56 (Jews protesting against Moses).

⁷⁰ E.g., Ps. 34:11 (False witnesses); Ps. 38:10 (Arrest of Christ); *Treasures III*, figs. 190, 193.

⁷¹ Kartsonis (1986), 136–137, 156–157.

John 10:31–39,⁷² which is partly quoted below the image. Depictions of Christ being stoned are rare. The earliest instance appears on a fourth-century sarcophagus, now in the Church of St. Sebastian in Rome. All other known examples are from a later date and survive in eleventh-century Gospels as a direct illustration for John 8:59 and 10:31.⁷³ The eleventh-century marginal Psalters lack this scene. While the Barberini Psalter (fol. 142v) closely follows the Chludov iconography in representing the Anastasis, the Theodore Psalter⁷⁴ replaces this scene by Christ seated as a judge on three pagan idols (Ps. 81:1), thus symbolizing the victory of Christianity over paganism. Only in the thirteenth-century Hamilton Psalter⁷⁵ is the Anastasis combined with the scene of stoning, as in the Pantocrator and Chludov.

In choosing this scene, the designer of the Pantocrator Psalter was furthering his major undertaking of alluding events from the New Testament that emphasize the typological and polemical character of the Psalter: Jews encounter the true God, do not accept him, and attempt to stone him.

The two Psalters differ in the way that they depict Jews and also have slightly different approaches in their treatment of Iconoclasm. The number of scenes dealing with the iconoclastic controversy differs from one Psalter to another. The Chludov contains at least five scenes that deal directly and many others that deal indirectly with the iconoclasts, their actions and their defeat.⁷⁶ The actions of the iconoclasts are compared to those of the historical enemies of Christ, exposing the deep emotional involvement of the artist or planner in their depiction. In the Pantocrator Psalter, on the other hand, only two scenes refer directly to the victory over the iconoclasts. The first (fol. 16r) symbolizes their physical defeat and the second (fol. 165r) their ideological defeat.⁷⁷ In

⁷² The caption starts with John 10:31: ΕΒΑΣΤΑΣΑΝ ΠΑΛΙΝ ΑΙΘΟΥΣ above the image. Below: John 10:33–34 (John 10:32 is missing).

⁷³ Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, cod. Plut. VI.23, fol. 186v (John 8:59), Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. gr. 74, fol. 185v (John 8:59), fol. 189v (John 10:31); London, British Library, MS, Add. 39627 (Slavonic), fol. 238v (John 8:59), fol. 243r (John 10:31).

⁷⁴ London, British Library, MS, Add. 19352, fol. 110v; Barber (2000).

⁷⁵ Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kupferstichkabinett, cod. 78.A.9, fol. 158r.

⁷⁶ Fols. 10v, 23v, 35v, 51v, 67r, 70v, and others. The scene of the iconoclastic Council on fol. 23v stresses the whitewashing of Christ's image, indicating blood to the right of the icon and surrounding the council as a frame; Peers (2004), ch. 2.

⁷⁷ *Treasures III*, figs. 181, 229. On two anti-iconoclastic scenes in the Pantocrator Psalter see Ševčenko (1965), 39–60; and Dufrenne (1965), 83–95.

general, the anti-iconoclastic expression here is more sophisticated and less emotional.

Accordingly, the nuanced emphases suggest two distinct messages. In the Chludov Psalter the Jews appear as historical enemies, whereas the attacks of the iconoclasts on Orthodoxy are stressed. In the Pantocrator Psalter the Jews are the main enemies of Orthodoxy, being revealed in action, whereas the iconoclasts are shown in defeat.

Some comment may be useful here concerning the so-called "Semitic" type of caricature and its role in the marginal Psalters.⁷⁸ The type includes Jews depicted in profile, emphasizing long noses and sharply pointed beards. They appear as such mainly in the "historical" scenes, illustrating Psalms 77, 104, and 105 in the context of the Egyptian bondage and the wanderings in the desert (Fig. 9).⁷⁹ Most of the figures are small, illustrated in movements that distort their proportions, and it seems to me that they can hardly be considered as caricature in the sense of the Silenic type discussed above. The physical distortion sheds light on the role of the Jews in the biblical narrative, as opposed to their role in polemics. It appears that the artist felt free to distort his figures in order to convey the narrative, especially in regard to noncanonical figures.

The tradition of deliberate distortion of noncanonical figures to indicate movement can be observed in early Byzantine art, for instance, in the sixth-century Vienna Genesis (fols. 3r and 10v)⁸⁰ and in the Codex Rossanensis (fol. 2r).⁸¹ Although in both manuscripts the emphasis is on gesticulation, recalling the classical schema, and not on facial distortion, the figures are sometimes without necks and in exaggerated poses. Variation in size is also common in these early manuscripts: small-sized figures may be used to represent less important personages or multi-figured scenes as in the Vienna Genesis, fol. 15v.⁸² The eleventh- and twelfth-century Octateuchs contain more examples of distorted figures of Jews in the same contexts as in the marginal Psalters.⁸³ The Jews are

⁷⁸ Corrigan (1998), 353.

⁷⁹ Psalms 104 and 105, also illustrated with scenes from the Old Testament, almost entirely lack the disputation scenes, except for 105:16–18, but add scenes showing Jews as sinners, as, for instance, Jews sacrificing children to demons (Chludov, fol. 110r).

⁸⁰ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, cod. Theol. gr. 31; Mazal (1980), 109, and 115, figs. 5 and 20, respectively.

⁸¹ Sevrugian (1990), pl. 7.

⁸² Mazal (1980), 120, fig. 30.

⁸³ This is especially evident in the eleventh century Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, gr. 747. Weitzmann and Bernabò suggest that the expressiveness of the figures

full of dynamic energy; some of them have no necks, their gestures are emphasized, and their proportions exaggerated.⁸⁴ As a result, their bodily and facial expressions are strikingly conveyed.

It seems likely that the distortion of the Jewish figures wandering in the desert can be explained not by a desire to highlight Semitic characteristics, but rather to represent in the most graphic way the gathering of the manna and the quail, as well as other activities described in Exodus. Moreover, both the Chludov and the Pantocrator Psalters contain numerous figures in profile with no negative Jewish connotations, for example, John the Baptist (Ps. 73:13, Chludov, fol. 72v) and the Maccabees (Ps. 78:1–2, Pantocrator, fol. 110r),⁸⁵ whose delineations probably go back to the pre-iconoclastic tradition.⁸⁶

The exaggerations in the physical depiction of Jews in the “historical” scenes thus conform to the general expressive character of the Psalters and cannot be considered in relation to the Western type of Jewish caricature, which is much later in date. Physiognomy was to become one of the most prominent elements in Western caricature. Facial distortions, exaggerated expressions of emotions, and physical metamorphoses became obvious symbols of the diabolic world. The relationship of the Jews to this world is delineated through caricatural ugliness, especially hooked noses and pointed beards. These characteristics, as pointed out by Debra Higgs Strickland, produce a “family resemblance” between Jews and demons in late Medieval art, and can also be seen as signs identifying other negative non-Christian figures.⁸⁷ As we have seen, iconoclasts, not Jews, are visually compared to demons in the marginal Psalters. There is no evidence of special Jewish physiognomy in the Byzantine visual tradition in general, nor in the ninth century in particular.

in this manuscript echoes Syrian art of the sixth and seventh centuries; Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), 333, n. 24.

⁸⁴ E.g., Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 747, fol. 92r, 162r; Istanbul, Topkapi Saray [Seraglio] cod. gr. 8 *Library of Topkapi Sarayi, cod. G.I.8 (Gayri Islâmi 8)*, fol. 340r; Izmir [Smyrna], Evangelical School cod. A.1 (destroyed in 1922), fol. 158r; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 746, fol. 332r. Weitzmann and Bernabò (1999), figs. 716, 904, 906, 907, and 909.

⁸⁵ *Treasures III*, fig. 218.

⁸⁶ Evangelatou (2002), 112.

⁸⁷ Higgs Strickland (2003), 78.

Conclusion

The generally representative character of Byzantine art dictates the various approaches to imaging Jews. Old Testament figures that play a clearly defined role in Christian theological concepts lack any overt signs of Jewishness.

In the ninth-century marginal Psalters, on the other hand, the representation of Jews can be regarded as caricatural; their facial and bodily features are rendered in a classic Silenic style, resulting in an ugly, repulsive portrait. Thus their ugliness is not individual, as might perhaps be expected, but stereotyped.⁸⁸ We do not know whether caricature existed before the ninth century or if it was the anti-iconoclastic tensions that caused it to emerge.⁸⁹

The approach in these Psalters, then, is very different from that seen in later Western representations of Jews. The Western demonlike physiognomic concept is not observed in Byzantine art. Furthermore, the caricatural approach to the portrayal of the Jewish figures with stereotyped Semitic features does not serve the same purpose as in Western art. The emphatic profiles are used to indicate actions and can be discerned not only in negative figures, but in positive ones as well.

Despite the association of Jews and the diabolical world in polemical literature from the second century, and still common in ninth-century debates, Jews were not visually identified with Satan, and images of them do not display specifically demonic characteristics. It was the iconoclasts who were closely associated with diabolic imagery through their stiffened hair. Though there are many visual links between Jews and iconoclasts in the Chludov and Pantocrator Psalters, the Silenic face is not found among the iconoclasts, just as purely diabolical signs do not appear in connection with the Jews. The Silenic face joins the Jews to other negative characters—Hades, idols, and personifications—all belonging to the past.

⁸⁸ The Greeks regarded beauty as typical and ugliness as individual; Sassi (2001), 60.

⁸⁹ Scarcely any evidence has survived of the existence of Byzantine caricature. Satirical pamphlets were popular in Rome and Constantinople, but most evidence of Byzantine satire is of a later period; Tozer (1881), 233–270; Baldwin (1990), 429–431. The only other evidence of painted caricature discovered to date also belongs to the ninth century; it is found in the *Vita* of St. Ignatius (*PG* 105, 450ff) written by Nicetas Paphlago (late ninth/early tenth century), in the seven synodal Acts pronounced against the saint. The work, in two volumes, was illuminated by Bishop Gregory Asbestos of Syracuse; Mango (1972), 191, note 39; see also Baldwin (1990), 430.

The Silenic-like ugliness of the Jewish figures is consistently contrasted with the comparative beauty of the youthful haloed figures of Christ and Moses, visually positioning the groups in an adversarial situation. Considering the enormous amount of polemical literature that flourished in the Byzantine “dark ages,” which Cameron calls “a refinement of the techniques of controversy,”⁹⁰ the Silenic image might have been found in the hypothetical eighth-century prototype of these Psalters.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the caricatural approach was so unusual among the Byzantines that the Pantocrator Psalter shows signs of misunderstanding. It breaks up the homogeneity of the ancient enemies, which is stressed in the Chludov Psalter, and emphasizes only one group, the Jews, who are shown as especially aggressive through the choice of scenes and the repetitions of the Silenic face. The depiction of iconoclasts also varies, and a different message is conveyed. In the Pantocrator Psalter Jews are treated as a separate, hostile group and the anti-Jewish attitude thus becomes more evident. These divergences may support the assumption of different dates for the two manuscripts.⁹²

If the Pantocrator Psalter was executed during the patriarchate of Photius,⁹³ its perceptible hostility toward Jews can be associated with Emperor Basil I (867–886) and his attempts to baptize Byzantine Jews by force. Basil’s decision was perhaps inspired by Photius, who strongly supported the idea, but it was contested by other church authorities, whose argument was based on the claim that Jews are tanners and thus unclean.⁹⁴ Once again Jews found themselves in the midst of a polemical discourse, but this is a separate issue that deserves further investigation.

⁹⁰ Discussing literary activities during the “dark ages” up to the 780s, Cameron observes that an enormous polemical corpus was composed by both iconoclasts and Iconophiles, dominating other types of literature and showing “strong tendencies of synthesis and codification”; Cameron (1999), 198–215.

⁹¹ Jean-Claude Lechner in his recent study of the Pantocrator Psalter, making a strong case for a Syro-Palestinian origin of the prototype, proposes three hypotheses as to its date. The first includes the proto-iconoclastic model and it seems to me to be the most reasonable. Lechner (2002), 30–31.

⁹² It should be noted that in eleventh-century marginal Psalters Jews are once again identified by long colorful tunics, *paenulae*, and a specific headgear. Their faces are not distorted, although an elderly person is a common figure among them. By that time, the notion of caricature, so uncommon in Byzantium, had completely disappeared.

⁹³ Walter (1987), 220.

⁹⁴ Sharf (1995), 83–86; Starr (1939), 133–141; Krauss (1995), 64.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 77r (after: M. V. Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khluvovskoi Psaltyri* [Moscow, 1977]).
- Fig. 2. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 69r (after: S. Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age, I, Pantocrator 61, Paris grec. 20, British Museum 40731, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, I* [Paris, 1966], Pl. 10).
- Fig. 3. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 114v (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 17).
- Fig. 4. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 106v (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 15).
- Fig. 5. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 66r (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khluvovskoi Psaltyri*).
- Fig. 6. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 19v (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khluvovskoi Psaltyri*).
- Fig. 7. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 31r (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khluvovskoi Psaltyri*).
- Fig. 8. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 118r (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 18).
- Fig. 9. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 114r (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 17).
- Fig. 10. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 8v (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khluvovskoi Psaltyri*).

PART FIVE

HEBREW ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

JEWISH SCRIBES AND CHRISTIAN ILLUMINATORS*
INTERSTITIAL ENCOUNTERS AND
CULTURAL NEGOTIATION

Eva Frojmovic

A great deal of valuable work on representations of Jews and Judaism in medieval Christian art has moved the debate forward from a position defined in the 1960s, according to which these Christian representations were predicated entirely on the model of anti-Semitism.¹ By contrast, some recent research in the field has highlighted a range of contradictory impulses and scenarios for coexistence.² Where Jewish subjectivities are explored, a gradual sea change has led to a reevaluation: Jewish culture is no longer seen as “a closed and suspicious Jewish society, but one that succeeded in maintaining, alongside the hostility, a lively and open dialogue with the Christian milieu.”³ However, all of these studies remain resolutely based on texts and written documents, and only slowly has there been recognition of the value of art and material culture as documents of history.⁴ There is less work that explores Jewish subjectivities

* Almost a quarter of a century ago, I had the privilege of studying under Elisheva Revel-Neher. Now I have the privilege of saying thank you by dedicating this essay to her. Elisheva Revel-Neher taught something that I was then not quite ready to learn: to think of the relations between Jews and Christians in medieval art in a framework that transcends the adversarial rhetoric of anti-Semitism. And so it is only fitting that in this tribute essay, I explore the cultural encounter that arose from the collaboration between a Jewish scribe and a Christian illuminator. All translations are mine unless otherwise specified.

¹ Blumenkranz (1966). Kraus (1967), ch. 7 is titled: “Anti-Semitism in Medieval Art.”

² Biddick (2003), Lipton (1999) and (2002), Merback (2007), Rowe (2006), Rubin (1999), Weber (2001).

³ Yuval (2006/2000), 28. The change can be traced among historians across the preceding decade. In chronological order: Yuval (1993) (an essay that had the effect more of an earthquake than of a sea change), Hoffman (1996), Marcus (1996), Einbinder (2002), Goldin (2002), Baumgarten (2004), Kruger (2005), Frassetto (2007), and Elukin (2007).

⁴ Yuval (2006/2000), 28 n. 52, suggests that the sea change in the perception of Jewish-Christian cultural relations was anticipated by art historians: “This has long been recognized by art historians... But this view has not been adequately accepted among historians, perhaps because the place of art in the everyday life of Ashkenazic Jewry has not been fully clarified. Or perhaps it is still considered a non-normative manifestation

in medieval art in a new key in relation to Christian visualities, but this field too has been growing.⁵

The danger of focusing nearly exclusively on Christian representations of Jews and Judaism is that we may unwittingly repeat the very same erasure of Jewish subject positions that some of these Christian representations enacted in the first place.⁶ To avoid silencing Jewish voices again, this time in scholarship, we must study the other side: how Jews used visual culture to imagine themselves, their history, and their communities. It was this imperative to explore the other side that attracted me to the illuminated Hebrew manuscripts of thirteenth-century Germany. For here, apparently for the first time, there arose a new world of narrative and allegorical images, images that paralleled and responded to the proliferation of images in high medieval Christian culture. My expectation was that the Jewish images would articulate Jewish subjectivities, just as Christian images articulate Christian subjectivities. Or do they?

Actually, any desire to recover an authentic and autonomous medieval Jewish subjectivity in art is bound to be thwarted. Jewish subjectivity is elusive, if not always ghostly. It can be seen as a mirror image of the complex and unstable relationship between co-emergent Jewish and Christian cultures. By co-emergent I mean that Jewish images are not merely passive responses to an assumed monolithic and unchanging Christian image culture, but that each changes in relation to the other's

of Jewish religious life in the Middle Ages." Important words, fully borne out by Yuval's sole citation of Joseph Gutmann's work from the 1960s and early 1970s, which suggests unfamiliarity with the more recent literature; see next note. Marcus (1996) is exceptional in his weaving together of textual and visual analyses. Bland (2000) occupies a special place, since in his extremely valuable study he discusses Jewish attitudes to the visual, as they emerge from written sources in great detail, but does not link the source analysis to a discussion of actual artefacts. The primacy of lachrymose history is still present in Bland (2000), 141: "Late medieval Jews were a persecuted minority. Oppressed by the church, they did not encounter Christian images and behold them as artistic masterpieces displayed in a museum. The grandeur and sanctity of Christian monuments were invisible to medieval Jewish eyes. Unlike hegemonic medieval Christian intellectuals who were able to discover 'beauty' in ancient polytheistic shrines, vanquished medieval Jews were unable to 'neutralize' Christian artefacts, aesthetize them, and experience them as 'art.'" It remains debatable in what sense medieval Christians understood "art," but at any rate this essay reviews the perceptual question raised by Bland.

⁵ From the last decade, I can only name a selection: Bland (2000) (see previous note), Epstein (1997); Frojmovic (2002); Kogmann-Appel (1999), (2000), (2004), and (2006); Shalev-Eyni (2004) and (2007); and Wolfthal (2004).

⁶ My thanks to Diane Wolfthal for first raising my awareness of this methodological problem.

culture. I do not mean to say that medieval Jews were constantly keeping an eye on their Christian neighbors. All I suggest is that whether knowingly or not, they were part of a larger cultural formation and that Jewish-Christian relations were part of that formation, whether the individual subjects were aware of it or not.

Jewish subjectivity is one that is always displaced in relation to an imaginary center. This center can take a number of forms, but for most of medieval Jewish history, it is elsewhere and in a different, utopian, time-place, and in art the messianic Jerusalem—not the real present of Speyer, Worms, or Mainz—serves to mark this utopian time and place.

Jewish artistic production occurs in displacement. It takes place in the interstices of social structures that a priori exclude the possibility of Jewish artistic production: the workshop structure and the guild system, the court, the church. All of these institutions excluded Jews, be it as patrons or as producers. By contrast, the *preguild* lay urban workshops of the early thirteenth century, unstable and staffed by itinerant craftsmen, could and did accommodate a mixed patron-artist relationship. These lay workshops worked for Jewish patrons as if they were *lay* patrons, that is, in a way structurally similar to the way in which they worked for the Christian laity.

Rather than seeing this displacement and this interstitial production as a weakness, I emphasize these characteristics, because they engendered something very special: an art that bears and exhibits the scars of the Jewish-Christian encounter in the sense that the physical defacement of the miniatures can be seen literally as a scar inflicted on the body of the book.⁷ Moreover, it is equally an art that demarcates—makes marks on and draws boundaries around—the dominant Christian discourse on/of images by means of its critical use of Christian images.

In this essay, I focus on an instance in which Jewish patrons commissioned Jewish scribes and Christian illuminators in a self-conscious attempt to follow the practice of Christian lay people, especially the nobility, of commissioning sumptuous illuminated books as status symbols. My case study is the so-called Munich Rashi, Bayerische

⁷ I am indebted to Mieke Bal (response to my paper at the “Migratory Aesthetics” conference, AHRC Centre for Cultural Analysis, Theory and History, University of Leeds, 2006) for her suggestion that one might see the defacement of the manuscript as a scar of the encounter.

Staatsbibliothek Cod. Hebr. 5.⁸ The manuscript, born out of considerable efforts at cultural mediation and translation, is a commentary on rather than an imitation of Christian image practices. Following Hamid Naficy's work on "accented cinema," I call this Jewish commentary "accented manuscript illumination."⁹

Naficy's book is devoted to contemporary filmmaking by exilic, diasporic, and postcolonial filmmakers, perhaps a surprising inspiration for an essay on Jewish scribes and patrons and Christian illuminators. And yet, Naficy's book made me see and recognize new things in this manuscript. Naficy states: "If the dominant cinema is considered universal and without accent, the films that diasporic and exilic subjects make are accented." Naficy is quick to point out that the accent is not a literally audible phenomenon: "...the accent emanates not so much from the accented speech of the diegetic characters as from the displacement of the filmmakers and their artisanal production modes."¹⁰ I argue that something similar happened in the visual culture of the medieval Jewish communities in Christian Europe in relation to the dominant Christian image culture. The difference is that authorship is much more dispersed, in that the actual painters could be Christians working for Jewish scribes and patrons *who have to be considered co-authors*.

Indeed, in Hebrew manuscript production, displacement of makers and production modes vis-à-vis dominant models can be observed: itinerant scribes and migrant patrons lead to unstable partnerships with Christian craftsmen in an interstitial space not fully controlled by either the monastic scriptorium or the urban guild: "Another element of accented cinema is stylistic and iconographic: They signify and signify upon exile and diaspora by expressing, allegorizing, commenting upon, and critiquing the home and host societies and cultures and the deterritorialized conditions of the filmmakers."¹¹

Of course, some of this is not relevant to our discussion. After all, the visual language of all, not just Jewish, medieval visualities differ radically from modern visual languages. Nevertheless, I was powerfully struck by the poetic articulation of the scribe's exilic condition in his

⁸ Klemm (1998), vol. 1, 198–202, with older literature, to which add the brief but dense entry in Steinschneider (1895), 2.

⁹ Naficy (2001).

¹⁰ Naficy (2001), 4.

¹¹ Naficy (2001), 4.

colophon, and by the performance of an erasure of Christian image culture in the images of the Munich Rashi.

Cultural Negotiation

In this first part of this essay, I focus on the concrete processes of cultural negotiation between minority and majority subjects that are jointly involved in production. I am interested in tracing the process itself: encounter, communication, and the back and forth of negotiation between two unequal partners of which the “weaker one,” the Jewish patron, is in this case the customer with “purchasing power” and has to be treated as such, so that the normative Jewish-Christian power relationships are temporarily suspended.

The encounter I ask us to imagine appears at first look to have been an encounter in the everyday: in 1233, a scribe entered the workshop of an illuminator in the city of Würzburg, possibly headed by Master Heinrich “the Painter” (Hainricus pictor). At that time, this lay illuminator’s workshop was developing a synthesis of French and Thuringian aristocratic models, a synthesis that had great appeal to noble lay patrons in the area.¹² The workshop does not seem to have been part of a monastic scriptorium, and although one ecclesiastical and one monastic book survive from its production, it was known for its high-quality, deluxe devotional books for aristocratic lay customers—just what the scribe’s patron was looking for.¹³ The scribe probably had with him some large parchment folio quires—probably not the whole book—that he wanted illuminated for his wealthy patron. What was required was a comprehensive cycle of initial word panels with biblical narrative scenes, one full-page miniature, and a number of pages decorated with ornamental bands and grotesque marginal figures. The scribe indicated

¹² Engelhart (1987) traces the output of this workshop, with due emphasis on its luxury products, though he was not conscious of the probable lay patronage of several of them. Elisabeth Klemm’s introduction to her 1998 catalogue (vol. 1) constitutes an important updating of the evidence.

¹³ These facts have been inferred by Klemm from the colophon of the Dominican Bible, 1246, where Hainricus is named as a lay person, and from the deluxe character of the surviving Psalters from this area; see Klemm (1998), vol. 1, 202: “We have to assume the production [of the Munich Rashi] in an illuminator’s workshop that worked for diverse patrons (probably not a monastic scriptorium).” By contrast, Engelhart (1987), 17, worked on the assumption that the Hainricus workshop was monastic.

that the quires he had brought were part of a very substantial volume, consisting of hundreds of folios. This was a business proposition that might keep the workshop employed for a good while.

However, what made this encounter not so everyday was the identity of the scribe and of his patron: they were both Jewish. Shelomo ben Shemuel (Solomon son of Samuel) was a member of a well-respected family of scribes in Würzburg. We can trace the activity of several members of this family in the 1230s, and what they all have in common is that they wrote texts for books that received a new form of decoration: narrative initial word panels—not ornamental, but figurative. This kind of illustration seems to have been unknown in medieval Hebrew manuscripts prior to this period (the early 1230s). The book whose quires Shelomo was discussing with the Christian illuminator may in fact have been the first ever such project to be attempted (certainly no earlier experiment of this kind survives). Shelomo's patron was Rabbi Yosef ben Rabbi Moshe (Master Joseph, son of Master Moses).¹⁴ Yosef ben Moshe was a man of substance: specified as "from Ulm," he is named in the colophon of another large-scale illumination project, the three-volume Ambrosian Bible (Milan Biblioteca Ambrosiana Inf 30–32). Given his documented involvement in two prominent illuminated manuscripts, we can be sure that R. Yosef was just as much, if not more, of a driving force behind this project as the scribe. If he had social, economic, or educational/scholarly contacts with Christians, he may even have known and admired the kinds of deluxe prayer books that were becoming fashionable among the local nobility just at that time.¹⁵

The encounter is one between unequal partners, but a close look at the relationship yields some surprises. Shelomo signaled his belonging to a local context by signing his colophon as "Shelomo ben Shemuel the scribe from Würzburg." By contrast, the Christian illuminator may have been a newcomer to Würzburg, possibly a migrant from northern Germany who arrived in the wake of the installation of the Würzburg's bishop from Thuringia. Heinrich "the painter" seems to have employed a heterogeneous team of assistants/partners, some of whom were familiar with French models. Despite the evidence for Heinrich's status as head of a heterogeneous and unstable workshop, we are at first inclined to

¹⁴ "Rabbi" in this context must be seen as an honorific title, not denoting the status of an ordained or accepted rabbinical scholar.

¹⁵ The most splendid instance is the Psalter Munich Clm 3900 by the same workshop; see Klemm (1998), vol. 1, 204.

think of Shelomo, not Heinrich, as the migrant—because the scribe was Jewish. Admittedly, the Jewish community of Würzburg was possibly no more than three generations old, but by the 1230s it was well established, despite intermittent threats from Christian authorities, and boasted eminent rabbinic scholars. Würzburg was by then part of a chain of Jewish settlements that extended eastward from the Rhine (Speyer, Worms, Mainz) along the Main River and all the way to Regensburg (and ultimately Vienna).¹⁶

From a traditional Jewish point of view, the project that Shelomo brought to Heinrich's workshop was unprecedented, even daring. This comprehensive and ambitious decorative plan, which remained unfinished, was to comprise:

- Over seventy narrative illuminations at the heads of books and Parashiot (weekly Torah readings). These were planned in a hierarchic structure, that is, larger title miniatures over two text columns at the beginning of biblical books and smaller ones over one column for the Parashiot. Fifteen were completed (thirteen in Genesis and Exodus and one each at the beginning of Job and Daniel, respectively).¹⁷
- Sixteen decorative pages at the end of biblical books (five were completed at the end of Genesis and Deuteronomy, three at the end of Job, and two at the end of Ecclesiastes without colors; the last pages 252v–255v were prepared but not illuminated).
- A full-page miniature of the Menorah (the seven-branched golden candelabrum in the sanctuary).
- A plethora of decorative letters and borders throughout the text.

In addition, the scribe, an able calligrapher and competent draftsman, added renditions of Rashi's maps of Canaan near the end of the Book of Numbers¹⁸ and a sketch of a sukkah, a palm branch, and a basin in the Book of Kings.

¹⁶ Elbogen (1934), 475–496, Avneri (1968), 928–936, and Müller (1993) with some comments on the medieval tombstones discovered in 1987; Müller (2001), esp. 515–527; Flade (1996). On the Jewish scholars of Regensburg, see Kanarfogel (2006).

¹⁷ It is not known why the project was abandoned unfinished. It is noteworthy that the workshop worked simultaneously on different quires in different parts of the Rashi manuscript. These ruptures also happened in Christian manuscripts, e.g., the Kassel Willehalm; see Holladay (1996).

¹⁸ Gruber (1994).

Nothing similar had ever been attempted in a Hebrew manuscript before. It was to be illuminated in the full panoply of the illuminator's palette of colors, including burnished gold. Within the Jewish community, this unprecedented project seemed to have made possible only through the services of the recently established (Christian) lay illuminator. Previously, any patron wanting a Christian illuminator to work for him would have had to approach a monastic scriptorium—evidently not a viable proposition for Jewish patrons.

How do we know the identities of the *dramatis personae*? Shelomo ben Shemuel and Yosef ben Moshe are named in the lengthy, learned, and allusive, partly rhymed colophon at the end of the second volume of Munich Ms. Hebr 5 (full text and translation in the appendix). The illuminator is nowhere named and his identity had to be extrapolated from stylistic features that link this Hebrew manuscript with Latin manuscripts from Würzburg. The artist, or rather artistic team, of the Munich Rashi is, as Hanns Swarzenski noted in the 1930s, a Würzburg workshop responsible for the Würzburg Dominican Bible of 1246 and a number of splendid, but undated manuscripts for the church and (mostly) nobility. The workshop produced two projects for church institutions, an undated evangelistary and the four-volume Dominican Bible of 1246 (the only work signed by Heinrich).¹⁹ However, it is arguable that Heinrich's reputation and livelihood rested on the production of deluxe Psalters for the aristocratic laity. Since Swarzenski's survey, the Munich Rashi has been consensually attributed to this workshop, as its only work for Jewish patrons. In the 1980s, Engelhart still assumed that the workshop had to be part of a monastic scriptorium, but was unable to identify and locate it.²⁰ By contrast, more recent scholarship assumes an urban lay identity.²¹ It seems plausible that the emergence of a lay workshop made it possible for Jews to avail themselves of its services within a secular urban economy.

¹⁹ Dominican Bible, Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. F. m. 9/II and IV, vols. I and III destroyed; Evangelistary, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 23256; Psalter, Munich, Universitätsbibliothek, 4^o Cod. Ms. 24; Psalter Los Angeles, Getty Center, formerly Aachen, Collection Ludwig, Ms VIII 2; Psalter fragments, London, British Library, Add. 17687 and Los Angeles, Getty Center, Ms 4, leaf 1 and 2; Psalter, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 3900; the Psalter Melk, Stiftsbibliothek, Ms 1903. For thirteenth-century Franconian illumination, see Engelhart (1987) and Klemm (1998), vol. 1, 184–210. Most of the manuscripts, including the Munich Rashi, are discussed there.

²⁰ Engelhart (1987), vol. 1, 17.

²¹ Klemm (1998), vol. 1, 202.

The encounter between the Jewish scribe and the Christian illuminator left two parallel, now barely visible, traces inscribed in the margins of the manuscript: a set of Latin instructions for the illuminator, presumably written by Heinrich or a senior member of the workshop, and a set of Hebrew letter templates, written for the benefit of the Christian illuminator by someone versed in Hebrew calligraphy—presumably Shelomo ben Shemuel, the scribe. Neither of these is easy to illustrate in the present essay, because they were written in leadpoint, then erased, and finally cropped by the binders.²² But even the page layout of the book may be another trace of collaboration, as although the layout was normally determined by the scribe, if images were intended it is possible that the layout of decorated pages was coordinated between scribe and illuminator before the writing began.

The surviving fragments of instructions in Latin specify subject matter. They name the *dramatis personae*: Abraham, Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Job and [his] wife; they ascribe fairly minimal verbs and actions: Esau “comes to meet” Jacob (fol. 29v); Joseph “is sold” (fol. 34). Sometimes, they just name a scene: “*Somnium Pharaonis* . . .,” Pharaoh’s dream (the rest of the inscription, which probably specified which dream was to be illustrated, is illegible; the image, on fol. 37, shows the appearance of the seven fat cows).

The Hebrew templates for the initial words, which Elisabeth Klemm first noted in her 1998 catalogue, are very unusual, possibly unique. They consist of very carefully drawn, “lifesize” outlines of the complete words. These letters were meant to be painted in thick strokes, but the template is drawn in thin leadpoint, so the scribe—for that is who must have done them—took care to draw the outlines of each letter in a double line (Fig. 1: detail of fol. 21v).²³

Although the written records are in Latin and in Hebrew, we have to assume that the conversation was held in the vernacular. What this means for the Christian partner is relatively clear: a local dialect of Middle High German. Whether the Jewish partner spoke Yiddish (leaving out the Hebrew words unintelligible to his Christian interlocutor)

²² On conservation grounds, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek will not photograph these details (or take any new shots of the mss). Figure 1 is the only one where I was able to capture a bit of the template by scanning and then enlarging a detail from the slide provided by the library.

²³ It is not clear what happened on fol. 6, where the template provided did not spell out the first word of the Parasha, but instead named the subject of the picture (“tevah,” the ark), and that is what the illuminator inserted into the initial word panel.

or whether he was also able to speak Middle High German we do not know for certain, as the oldest written record in Yiddish postdates our period by forty years. This vernacular was not just a range of spoken dialects, but Middle High German was also the language of verse romances, poems, and vernacular religious works for lay consumption. In other words, German (and to a lesser degree, Yiddish) occupied a space that was marked as lay and was thus at least partly outside the orbit of clerical culture with its threatening overtones of ecclesiastical universalism.

Latin, Hebrew, German, and perhaps Yiddish; speaking, drafting notes, and templates; writing a book and creating images—we can see how many acts of translation were needed to accomplish the collaboration that Shelomo and Hainricus pictor's workshop undertook to produce the volume. Moreover, each act of translation involved a process of cultural negotiation between the Jewish and Christian cultures that these men inhabited. Although not quite the same as an Iranian exile watching a film with Turkish subtitles in a Paris cinema with the help of a translating friend, these processes add up to a "chain of linguistic and cultural signification" characteristic of diasporic cultural production.²⁴

The verbal communication concerned a program of biblical illustration, that is, an iconographic program, as well as a mode of representation that initially resembled Christian art, but ended up diverging significantly. In the next section of this essay, I focus on the mode of representation, which is neither iconography nor style in isolation. It is, rather, the method by which a narrative is pictured so as to transform Christian modes of representation into Jewish ones.

An Accented Mode of Representation

The problem that necessitated a new mode of representation was the specter of idolatry. Jewish communities in Christendom wished to distance themselves from the Christian image worship, which was considered idolatrous. As images in Christian religious manuscripts served devotional, not just illustrative ends, images in illuminated manuscripts also had the potential of being idolatrous. To illustrate the problem and the solutions arrived at in this manuscript, I juxtapose two Jewish

²⁴ Naficy (2001), 3.

reactions to Christian images: a denial of the Christian image and a rejection of the Christian image. The denial of the Christian image is embodied in the aniconic full-page miniature in the book, the only such image in this book and an image that presents the touchstone for the mirage of purity and segregation-as-holiness. The rejection of the Christian image can be found in a narrative image where the relationship between Christian image making and Jewish rejection of Christian cult images reaches its crisis.

The denial of the Christian (cult and devotional) image can be exemplified by the only full-page miniature in this book, which depicts the seven-branched golden candelabrum, the Menorah (Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 65; Fig. 2). The page constitutes a meeting point between two distinct pictorial traditions, the devotional and the didactic. The Menorah was a monumental image of the Israelite cult, now transformed into an image of memory, devotional reflection, and messianic hope. At the same time, the Menorah is part of a parafigurative tradition of didactic, diagrammatic illustration of Rashi's works. This separate tradition is independent of the art of the illuminator. Rather, it rests in the hand of the scribe-draftsman. There are numerous manuscripts of Rashi's great Bible commentary whose only illustrations are didactic: they contain unilluminated drawings of the same shape of Menorah as the Munich Rashi, according to Rashi's exegesis: with its flames converging toward the central flame and its stepped footstool.

These exegetical details had to rely on a scribal drawing or an illustrated (though probably not illuminated) model manuscript, which would also have contained diagrammatic maps of the Holy Land and the Sanctuary. Indeed, the Munich Rashi does include these diagrammatic maps carefully laid out and labeled by the scribe (fol. 140), who clearly followed an established model. The Menorah page, then, negates the art of the Christian illuminator, especially the tradition of devotional images in manuscripts, but at the same time shows evidence that the artist took advantage of the same techniques. With the full panoply of the artist's colors and gold leaf—and gold is central to the iconography of this golden sanctuary implement—the Menorah is that great aniconic icon, a nonfigurative and hence nonidolatrourous object of devotion and cult.²⁵ This status as aniconic icon is reinforced by the flat, diagrammatic style. The Menorah may also have served as a "Gegenentwurf," a

²⁵ Revel-Neher (1998); Frojmovic (2002); Kogman-Appel (2004), 156–168.

counterdesign to the Christian appropriations of the Jewish Sanctuary, appropriations we find from the time of Cassiodorus onward and quite commonly in the cathedrals (Essen, Braunschweig, Milan, etc.) of the high medieval Holy Roman Empire.²⁶ It is in fact quite possible that the *Menorah*, initially one didactic image among several, rose to such iconic prominence in Jewish visual culture in response to the Christian appropriations. So even here, in the supposed purity of the aniconic, in the total denial of the Christian figurative world, we still find hybridity and cultural negotiation rather than separation.

The full challenge presented by Christian image culture, production, and consumption becomes visible in the narrative panels introducing the Parasha (weekly Torah reading) incipits and book incipits of the commentary text. What was at stake between the Jewish scribe as an agent of his patron and the Christian illuminator was the simultaneous attraction of the beauty of Christian art and the repulsion of Christian idolatry. A Jewish figurative art became possible only because the Jewish scribe and the Christian illuminator were able to jointly develop a nonidolatrourous mode of figuration.²⁷ In fact, for about a century to come, illuminators of Hebrew manuscripts in southern Germany employed a series of representational modes designed to avoid the stigma of the idolatrous image, a taboo that crops up in many places in rabbinic literature. Among these modes were figurative images where the faces were substituted with those of animals and birds—faces covered by ample hair, by wreaths and helmets and hoods, and even hands. The earliest experiment with nonidolatrourous images is the one we find in the Munich Rashi: faces blanked out by means of a careful scraping away of facial features, especially the eyes. But that is not how the work was planned. It was rather designed as a fully figurative cycle of images. In the first instance, the faces were all fully painted and only erased in the course of the work. Why? And how was this erasure understood then, and how can we understand it within a critical framework?

An analysis of folio 47v can help us to appreciate what was at stake (Fig. 3). On folio 47v, the Christian world of figurative images clashed with Jewish taboos. Because the Latin instructions do not survive,

²⁶ Bloch (1963).

²⁷ The Munich Rashi was probably not the only example of Jewish-Christian collaboration. I have found Latin instructions for the illuminator also in the Laud Mahzor, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Or. 321, an undated manuscript of the later thirteenth century.

we cannot be sure what the illuminator (or the scribe, for that matter) thought the subject was to be. The text this image prefaces is the commentary to *Va'era*, the second Parasha in the book of Exodus (Ex. 6:2–9:35). This panel is the first visual appearance of the biblical Moses in this manuscript, and it is thus reasonable to interpret it as some form of “Calling of Moses,” since that is what the narrative structure requires at this point in order to effectively introduce the hero. The text in the early part of this Parasha does not offer much narrative plot. It opens with God revealing his name to Moses, a flashback (historical recapitulation of the divine relationship with the Hebrews), a series of orders and instructions from God to Moses and Aaron regarding the Hebrews and Pharaoh, and a genealogical excursus.

Moses’ mission gets off to an inauspicious start when the Hebrews disbelieve his promise of redemption.²⁸ Which particular moment in the biblical narration the image is supposed to represent is unclear, but what is clear is that the illuminator broke a major Jewish taboo: the prohibition against the divine image. Moses, larger than the two other men and placed in the center of the composition, is conversing with God. For none other than God could have been pictured in the quarter-circle at the top right. The (empty) scroll in his left hand and his right hand gesturing toward the right indicate that he is engaged in a conversation with the heavenly apparition. The two men on the left function as witnesses. The central personage in the red mantle mediates between the left and right half of the composition by seemingly pointing out the heavenly quarter-circle to his companion on the extreme left. That companion has half lifted both hands, palms up. Although the three individuals in this image appear to be tied together into a meaningful scene, this impression is misleading. The composition is made up from stock figures that give the appearance of being specific to one particular verse or situation, but do not serve to identify chapter and verse. They create a generic image of Moses as the man who saw God face-to-face and lived.

This image, I believe, was the turning point of the project, for until then the narrative situations had been cleverly chosen to avoid having to picture the Divinity. Noah greets the dove, Jacob dreams of the heavenly ladder, and Lot is rescued from the conflagration of Sodom and Isaac from the prepared altar, all by angels without direct divine

²⁸ The Parasha *Va'era* comprises Ex. 6:2–9:35.

intervention. But on fol. 47 the illuminator breached the terms of an agreement (however it may have been framed) and represented a direct encounter between man and God, which was unacceptable to the patron and his society. The illuminator was forced to erase the quarter-circle completely. This was done very carefully, so that much of the black contour that delineated the heavens as a separate realm in the first place was preserved. The resulting, amputated image can be seen to be “truly” judaized, in that Moses can be imagined as conversing with a radically aniconic deity. The contour of the quarter-circle alone is in fact sufficient to guarantee our understanding of the image’s iconography: a bust, probably haloed, and not just a hand in a cloud. Once the offending divine image was erased, the taboo was lifted.²⁹

However, a suspicion of idolatry appears to have been raised, and the Jewish partners in this venture decided that even the human faces had to be defaced in order to stay on the safe side of idolatry. This was a significant step. My contention is that the Christian illuminator was asked to undertake this erasure himself, since it was done with almost surgical care and skill, trying to preserve as much as possible of the image while erasing the facial features, especially the eyes (some mouths are still extant).

We do not know how Shelomo ben Shemuel explained the need for defacement to his Christian partner, but he had to find a way of conveying to him the urgency of annulling the idols. Nullification of the idols is in fact the technical term for what happened with the defacement of the Munich Rashi. This term is first explained in the Mishnah and the Talmud, and then codified in Moses Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*.³⁰ The crucial stipulation is that for nullification to be valid, the idolater himself must deface the idol before the Jewish patron/buyer/finder takes possession. The rabbinic sources, which clearly consider sculptures and three-dimensional objects, recommend chiseling off noses or ears. In the two-dimensional realm of manuscripts, eyes were the more common focus of the nullifier’s efforts. Thus a member of the Christian workshop

²⁹ At the end of the thirteenth century, a similar collaboration between a Christian illuminator and Jewish scribe led to a similar “clean-up” operation in the Kaufmann *Mishneh Torah*; Cohen (1988).

³⁰ The nullification of idols is regulated in the treatise *Avodah Zara*, ch. 4, of the Mishnah (1933), 442, and Babylonian Talmud, *Avodah Zarah* fols. 52b–53b, Babylonian Talmud (1961), Seder Nezikin, vol. 4, 267–272; Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Idolatry, ch. 8, sections 8 and 10.

had to carry out the defacement, not the Jewish scribe or patron. Once nullified, the idolatrous image is permitted for Jewish use.³¹

The erased facial features, especially the eyes, are the scars of the encounter between Christian and Jewish image cultures. The result is what I call an accented mode of representation. This accented mode modifies the Christian way of representing narrative, while quite literally placing it under erasure. This mode of representation, an ironic commentary on the condition of being a minority, opens the way to the tradition of narrative images populated by faceless or animal faced personae, persons that cannot face or be faced by us. Their defacement has the immediate effect of lifting them out of Christian image culture and even of distinguishing them out of the potentially neutral sphere of secular “images of adventure.” But the eye and the brain quickly get used to supplying the missing features and even imagining their “expression.” Thus narrative can take place in this accented mode.

Narrating Exile

The accented mode of representation has to be borne in mind when examining the narrative program. Thérèse Metzger subjected these miniatures to a rigorous scrutiny and uncovered a number of discrepancies vis-à-vis the biblical text and Jewish iconographic tradition (see the appendix).³² These discrepancies are not attributable to rabbinic interventions, but on the contrary include overt Christian elements. One cannot fail to notice that these visual narratives are full of generic vagueness and iconographic imprecisions and, above all, that they are suffused with Christian traditions of typology and controlled by incarnational theology. The illuminators failed at least in one instance to observe the ban against the divine image (vol. 1, fol. 47, above). On fol. 18v, by placing Isaac on a cruciform pyre of wood with his hands and feet crossed, they inscribed a Christian typology (Isaac’s sacrifice anticipates Jesus’

³¹ The question often arises whether the Munich Rashi was not defaced decades or even centuries later. The answer is surely negative, because this experimental manuscript is followed by a consistent string of manuscripts that all employ formalized procedures for nullifying the idols. The little-known late-thirteenth-century mahzor in Parma, Ms. Parm. 2887, uses blank faces that have not been defaced, but that quote the erasure committed in the Munich Rashi (see Beit-Arie and Richler eds. (2001), 250 cat. no. 1010, with photograph).

³² Metzger (1974), 537–552.

sacrifice; Fig. 4). In the first case (the taboo divine image), the patron or scribe enforced a correction, an event that may have triggered the defacement of the entire set of figures. In the second case (allusions to Christian typology), a Jewishly socialized and acculturated reader/viewer was expected to disregard the Christological allusion. Iconographically, the miniatures of the Munich Rashi are hybrid objects, both Jewish and Christian, and these two cultural forces remain in an uneasy balance that can only be tipped by the accented mode of representation, which estranges these images from their Christian roots.

Metzger did not see the instructions for the illuminator and letter templates, so she was convinced that the illuminators were Jews. The discrepancies thus remained puzzles to her, inexplicable “mistakes.” (tabulated in the appendix). After Suckale drew attention to the Latin instructions in 1988 and Elisabeth Klemm noted the letter templates in 1998, we have to conclude that these were not blunders by Jewish artists.³³ We can now see the “non-Jewish intrusions” as traces of the professional formation and visual culture of the Christian illuminators. This formation could include genuine errors (such as Lot saved together with a man instead of his two daughters (fol. 9v) or the mix up between Esau’s and Jacob’s followers), but other “mistakes” make sense in the Christian context in which they originated.

The negotiation between the Jewish scribe and the Christian illuminator about what was to be painted and how was a process in which the Jewish scribe would have had a role in reducing the inscription of Christian meanings and in enforcing as far as possible a self-consciously Jewish reading of the Bible. While inscriptions of Christological meanings were hard to avoid in subjects such as the Binding of Isaac, the scribe had a role in the construction of the overall narrative thread through the selection and ordering of the scenes. The result is a hybrid, in which Jewish ideologemes and sensibilities both clash and mingle with Christian references. The narrative (and nonnarrative)³⁴ images have been organized into sequences that retell a rhythmic and contrapuntal version of the biblical fabula of journeys and exiles across the pages of the commentary, structuring a remembered text (after all,

³³ Suckale (1988), 123–134.

³⁴ Paradoxically, the nonnarrative images—the candelabrum and maps of Canaan, and other scribal drawings—are the only text illustrations that visually record Rashi’s interpretations of the biblical text. An illustrated autograph or authoritative manuscript may have provided the model for these nonnarrative images.

this manuscript contains a commentary, but not the Bible text) into meaningful units.

Much of the narrative is redefined in such a way as to eliminate as far as possible the figure of God from the plot—not an easy task in a covenantal narrative, where God intervenes as creator and redeemer. Instead, intermediaries in the form of angels and other messengers drive the action. Folio 1 is lost; my guess—and it is only a guess—is that a composition of Adam and Eve in the Garden served as the opening image (not God creating the world, as was common in Christian Genesis initials at the time).³⁵ In the Flood (fol. 6), Noah welcomes the dove without God's blessing. On fol. 9v, Sodom is destroyed by an angel. On fol. 18v, Isaac's sacrifice is prevented by an angel who appears out of the clouds. On fol. 25v, the ladder in Jacob's dream is frequented by ascending and descending angels, but the divine figure so common in Christian representations of the subject is absent. Instead, the ladder disappears in clouds. Several of the events from the patriarch's lives are narrated as human dramas free from divine intervention. As mentioned earlier, the crisis of nonidolatrous representation arrives with Moses' first appearance on fol. 47v. As Moses' special privilege had been to be called by God personally, to "see God face-to-face and live," the choice of this scene was especially problematic to a community that shied away from any representation of God. We do not of course know in this case what the scribe asked the painter to paint—an angel? a hand in a cloud? We do not know what the iconography that the painter got so spectacularly wrong was supposed to be.

The visual narrative of the Munich Rashi can be read as an allegory of exile. Exile is not always explicitly thematized, let alone realistically depicted, but displacements and journeys abound: Noah and Lot have to leave their homes to save their lives; Jacob has to leave to flee the wrath of Esau (who was commonly interpreted as symbolic of Christianity in Jewish sources; Fig. 1); Joseph is sold into captivity; Jacob's family joins him in exile (Joseph, in rich court dress, in the Byzantine

³⁵ The two almost contemporary Hebrew Bibles in Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, B 30–32 inf. (dated 1236–1238) and Wrocław, University Library Ms. M 1106 (1237–1238) open on their first folios with Adam and Eve (separated by the width of the illuminated initial word panel) wearing leaves to cover their genitalia and stretching out their arms toward each other. They appear like cutouts from a scene of the Fall, but minus the snake. With the addition of assorted animals, the scene of the Fall is transformed into a nonidolatrous image of Creation (without the Creator). The Munich Rashi may have opened with a more conventional scene of the Fall.

style, welcomes his father and brothers, who are by contrast marked by traveling gear and pointed “Jewish” hats, to Egypt); the Israelites wander through the desert. The harshness of exile, however, is folded away in a heroic narrative of journeying and adventure. The travails of the Hebrews in the Egyptian diaspora—the reason for the Exodus—are omitted entirely. Exile is made invisible as a narrative of suffering that might have resonated with the medieval present. Instead, the Moses cycle—now incomplete—seems to have offered a heroic narrative of leadership, beginning not with the hero’s birth but with his calling to his mission. The theme of exile is also in evidence in the middle part of Shelomo ben Shemuel’s colophon: “In exile and with the Messiah / His angels to summon me / From sorrow to conceal me / When the guardian will carry me” (full text in the appendix). Difficult as its syntax may be to interpret, it is clear that this is a prayer for a messianic redemption from exile.

The Other, always also presumably understood as the Christian Other, is represented in terms of idolatry. The idolatry of the Other is pictured spectacularly in a miniature toward the end of the unfinished tome (presently, fol. 209v of the second volume; Fig. 5), which is the beginning of the Book of Daniel. The Daniel panel is exceptional in that it encompasses a tripartite sequence within one panel, a composition that makes for a very different viewing experience than the other narrative panels, which are monoscenic. In this tripartite narrative sequence, the rhetorical devices of the series, correspondences, and contrasts can be taken in simultaneously. One might have expected an author portrait of the prophet at the beginning of his book, but instead the adoration of the statue and the ordeal of the three young men in the fiery oven are juxtaposed, the dwarf king and his lackeys making up the middle. The scenes are to be read from right to left, in the direction of Hebrew script. On the right, then, and approaching from the right, a group of four men adore the golden idol on their knees, with hands folded and raised in [Christian] prayer, forming a 1 + 4 grouping. The left scene is subdivided again, so as to form three compartments of more or less equal width. The fiery oven forms a frame delimiting a picture within the picture, just like the column formed a framing device between the scene of idolatry and the king’s execution command. In rhetorical and stylistic terms, this last part would contain the most important information.

So it is in iconographic terms as well: The evil Nebuchadnezzar is in the center of the miniature, in a 1 + 4 grouping with his lackeys,

thus corresponding to the scene of idolatry. The three young men in the fiery oven are in a 3 + 1 grouping, protectively embraced by the angel. The general movement from right to left is only interrupted by the firebrands that jump back to the right and at the horrified lackeys and the king. The narrative is organized in clustered groups: idol and adorants, evil king and executioners, young men and angel. The action is moved forward by the emphatic gestures of prayer and the aggressive gesture of the lancer, but then comes to a standstill inside the fiery oven and bounces back with the fiery brands. As the horrified miens of the executioners reflect back the fire and violence, the action comes to a dead end in the center of the composition. Visual narrative and its rhetorical devices of parallelisms and juxtaposition are used to convey contrasts between heroes and villains and between men's idolatry of a simulacrum that cannot save and the invisible intervention of God's angel, who can—with obvious resonance for communities of viewers for whom a picture of youth being burned to avoid idolatry had existential resonance at that time.

In her pioneering 1974 study of the Munich Rashi, Metzger asked the fundamental question: *dans quelle mesure ces enluminures sont-elles juives?* (to what extent are these miniatures Jewish?).³⁶ She asked this long before any evidence was found that the illuminators were not Jews. Nevertheless, she herself sought and found an unambiguous answer: no, these images are indistinguishable from Christian biblical images. Still, she was convinced that the artists were Jewish.

I hope that my analysis of narrative structures and themes has shown that this is not necessarily so. In fact, my answer is quite the opposite: although the illuminators were Christian, the images are in fact Jewish by virtue of their accented mode of representation and their narrative structure. Viewed by a Jewish audience of readers (and listeners) and viewers, the very exegetical traditions contained in the texts of the commentaries in the Munich Rashi would have been brought to bear onto the reading of the fundamental themes of exile and salvation.

The medieval manuscript that is the subject of this essay does not engage in a binary juxtaposition of homeland and exile. Rather, homeland is folded into exile in such a way that exile becomes invisible at the same time that it provides all the artistic means of representation. "Citadel cultures of withdrawal" are imagined but at the same time

³⁶ Metzger (1974), 550.

impossible because the dominant Christian culture provides all the means of production and all the structures of artistic language.³⁷ Thus exile remains ever present, even though often not openly acknowledged—allegorized and enunciated but not explicated.

Appendix

1. *The Colophon of Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Cod. Hebr. 5*

The full text of the colophon on folios 252v–256r of the second volume (Cod. Hebr. 5/II) runs as follows: I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. Benjamin Richler, Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, and Prof. Susan Einbinder, Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati, for her help with the translation.

אני שלמה ברבי שמואל/ כתבתי אילו פירושי עשרים/ וארבעה ספרים
לרבי יוסף/ ברבי משה בשנת ארבעת/ אלפים ותשע מאות ותשעים ושלשה
(255ב–252ב) לבריאת עולם, וזה/ יהיה זכרי בשובי לעפרי.
ברוך ה' לעולם אמן ואמן ודברי הטוב יאמן לכחש בשמן מעוכלא ועד תומן
בגלות ובמזומן מלאכיו לי לזמן מצר להיטמן כאשר ישא האומן.
אני שלמה ברבי שמואל ממדינת וירצבורק כתבתי אלו פירושים של עשרים
וארבעה ספרים לרבי יוסף בר' משה בשנת ארבעת אלפים ותשע מאות
ותשעים ושלשה לבריאת עולם והמקום יזכהו להגות בהם והורישם לבניו
ולבני בניו עד סוף כל הדורות אמן. ורוח ממרום יערה עלינו וסתורתו יאיר
עינינו. ויביא משיח צדקינו ויבנה בית מקדשינו. ושם תצמיח קרן אלינו.
(א256) אמן במהרה בימינו

I, Solomon son of R. Samuel, wrote these commentaries to the twenty-four books [of the Bible] for R. Joseph son of R. Moses in the year 4993 after the creation of the world. And this will [or may this] be my memorial when I return to dust:

Blessed be God for ever amen and amen
The words of [the] good shall be believed
For the lean when he fattens from an *Ukhlah* to a *Tomen*³⁸
In exile and with the Summoned One [Messiah]
His angels to summon me

³⁷ Naficy (2001), 6.

³⁸ These are Talmudic dry capacity measures, the first being the smallest and the second being the second smallest.

From sorrow to conceal me
When the guardian/nurse will carry [me].

I, Solomon, son of Rabbi Samuel from the city of Würzburg, have written these commentaries of the twenty-four books for Rabbi Joseph son of Rabbi Moses in the year four thousand and nine hundred and ninety-three after the creation of the world. And the “place” [i.e., God] may give him the merit to study them and to bequeath them to his sons and grandchildren until the end of all the generations, amen. And may the heavenly spirit be poured out onto us and his secrets may illuminate our eyes. And may he bring the Messiah of justice and may he rebuild the Temple. And there will the horn [of redemption] sprout unto us. Amen speedily in our days.

2. A “Catalogue of Errors”: Displaced Scenes, Factual Errors, Christian Interpretations in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5

<i>Folio</i>	<i>Displaced scenes</i>	<i>Factual errors</i>	<i>Disregard for Rashi's exegesis or inclusion of Christian elements</i>
Vol. 1, Fol. 6			Noah's ark interior organization (called for by Rashi) not shown.
Fol. 9v	Destruction of Sodom should be in the next Parasha.	Lot accompanied by one male instead of two daughters.	
Fol. 18v	Binding of Isaac should be in previous Parasha.		Isaac placed on cruciform wood.
Fol. 29v		Jacob and Esau's followers/kin exchanged.	
Fol. 39		Unclear which meeting. Why only seven brothers? Why is Benjamin not clearly marked?	
Fol. 40v			Jacob's blessing arm posture cruciform.

Table (cont.)

<i>Folio</i>	<i>Displaced scenes</i>	<i>Factual errors</i>	<i>Disregard for Rashi's exegesis or inclusion of Christian elements</i>
Fol. 44v	Misplaced: Joseph welcoming Jacob etc. should be two Parashiot earlier.		
Fol. 47v			God initially shown speaking to Moses.
Vol. 2, fol. 183		Job has four friends; it should be three!	

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Illustrations

Fig. 1. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5 / I, fol. 21v: Isaac on his deathbed refusing the firstborn blessing to Esau, with Jacob running away on the right. In the right margin, Hebrew template for the Christian illuminator (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).

- Fig. 2. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5 / I, fol. 65: The *Menorah* (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).
- Fig. 3. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 47v (detail): The Calling of Moses, initial panel to the second Parasha in Exodus (Ex. 6:2–9:35) (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).
- Fig. 4. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 18v: Binding of Isaac (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).
- Fig. 5. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/II, fol. 209v: Adoration of the Statue and The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Oven, initial panel to the Book of Daniel (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).

THE SCALES IN THE LEIPZIG MAHZOR
PENANCE AND ESCHATOLOGY IN EARLY
FOURTEENTH-CENTURY GERMANY*

Katrin Kogman-Appel

In the Middle Ages the Jewish liturgical cycle began in spring with the first special Sabbath. As typical of the *yotser* genre,¹ the *yotser* for that day refers repeatedly to the Pentateuch portion (*Parashat Shekalim*: Ex. 30:11–16) to be read in addition to the regular Sabbath pericope during the morning service. The biblical text describes the Israelites giving money, *shekalim*, to build the desert Tabernacle.

In accord with a common custom that developed in the mid-thirteenth century for the design of festival prayer books, mahzorim, it was this type of liturgical poem, the *yotsrot*, the poetic embellishments of the *Shema Israel* prayer, that received most of the artistic decoration, normally in the form of initial panels. As the mahzor contains only the poetic embellishments, but not the regular prayer, it is with these initial panels of the *yotsrot* that the liturgy of a new holiday is begun.² This is also the case in most sections of the so-called Leipzig Mahzor,³ where for *Parashat Shekalim* the opening word “*El*” of the *yotser* is decorated with a large panel containing four medallions of the eschatological creatures (Ezek. 1:4–25) and a balance surrounded by two dragons in the center of the composition (Fig. 1). In the upper margin a small hunting motif—a hare and a dog—can be discerned. The Leipzig Mahzor, written and illuminated around 1310 in southern

* An earlier version of this paper was delivered at the Fourteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, August 2005.

¹ Davidson (1924), vol. 1, 178, no. 3853.

² As observed by Shalev-Eyni (2001), 53, for the so-called Tripartite Mahzor; this system was often pursued, even though not religiously.

³ Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Völlers 1102/I–II; for a facsimile edition of the illuminations, see Katz (1964); for a CD-ROM version see Mackert (2004). In the liturgy of *Parashat Shekalim*, it is indeed only the *yotser* that is decorated; on other occasions, however, we also find other types of *piyyutim* embellished; see Shalev-Eyni (2001), 58, n. 30.

Germany, is a two-volume prayer book and one of the most elaborately decorated extant Ashkenazic mahzor manuscripts.⁴

Parashat Shekalim describes how the Israelites gave half a shekel each for the Tabernacle. Actual weighing of the *shekalim* is not mentioned explicitly. The text uses various forms of the root *kaph – pe – resh*. In verse 12: “Each man is to give a ransom for his life to the Lord (*kofer nafsho le’adonai*), to avert plague among them during the registration.” In verse 15: “...when you give the contribution for the Lord to make expiation for your lives (*lekhapper al nafshotechem*).” In verse 16: “The money received from the Israelites for expiation (*kesseph hakippurim*) you are to apply to the service of the Tent of Meeting.” In short, each man gives his ransom, which promises expiation—atonement. Similarly, the decorated liturgical poem creates a connection between the ransom and atonement for the sins, which is the main theme in its second section. The first part, however, ends with an allusion to the divine Throne of Glory as it is described in the first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:26–28).

The imagery on the Leipzig initial panel,⁵ which has no parallel and does not follow any established iconographical tradition, addresses all the aspects mentioned in both the biblical and the liturgical texts. The balance refers to the contributions of the Israelites. In an interpretation of this biblical event it is naturally assumed that the money collected for the Tabernacle was weighed. But the scales are also a common symbol for the atonement of sins. The balance is, finally, surrounded by medallions displaying the four creatures mentioned in the Ezekiel vision. In some sense, it is God who holds the scales, which are balanced and even; they

⁴ The Leipzig Mahzor has no colophon and its dating relied hitherto on stylistic considerations; an upper Rhenish provenance was suggested by Voller (1906), vol. 2, 437, no. 1102; followed later by Katz in his commentary volume, Katz (1964), 14–15, and Narkiss’s contribution in the same volume, 47; see also Sed-Rajna (1983), 16; C. Mackert in personal conversations and in a lecture he gave in Leipzig in 2005. I am indebted to Dr. Mackert for sharing the manuscript of his paper with me. In a later publication Narkiss locates the Leipzig Mahzor more generally in southern Germany, Narkiss (1984), 21. Recently Raeber (2003), 117–121, suggested a provenance in Freiburg im Breisgau. Elsewhere I shall revisit the question of its origin by examining its text version, which seems to point to the middle Rhine region; Kogman-Appel (in prep.).

⁵ An illustration of the *Shekalim* pericope and the related *yotser* is also found in the Worms Mahzor, Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, MS 4°781/1, Würzburg (?), 1272–73; for a facsimile edition, see Beit-Arié (1986); it shows the figure of a man with scales, with the heavy side inscribed “Israel.”

are attached to the upper frame by a hook and the vertical pole lies on the *lamed* of the *aleph-lamed* ligature standing for *El*, God.

Earlier research paid very little attention to this unusual setting, which, at first sight, seems to be entirely indebted to Christian art.⁶ Both elements play an important role in Christian eschatological iconography: the four creatures, understood as symbols of the Evangelists, are associated with the Second Coming of Christ (Fig. 2), and the scales are prominent in depictions of the Last Judgment (Fig. 3).⁷ The Leipzig image was thus understood as an eschatological weighing of the souls modeled after Christian representations of the Last Judgment.⁸ Elias Katz saw the balance as a symbol of God's judgment and the dragons as a representation of the forces of Satan attempting to change the balance of the scales.⁹

Awareness of Christian pictorial renderings of the End of Time is certainly evident in the Jewish version of the Leipzig Mahzor, but the details are a significant departure from Christian versions. The Leipzig image combines two motifs that Christian art—in particular architectural sculpture of the Romanesque and Gothic periods—normally represents in two different thematic settings. The four creatures are associated with the Second Coming (Fig. 2), whereas the scales dominate the imagery of the Last Judgment, often—as at the portal at Bourges Cathedral—accompanied by a devil with Jewish physiognomy (Fig. 3). In the Christian context the scales are never balanced, but tend significantly to the side of the Blessed. Apart from that, the Christian four creatures follow their description in the Apocalypse (Apoc. 4:6–8) rather than that of Ezekiel. This is apparent in the arrangement of the creatures: lion and ox on the bottom and man and eagle on top. All the animals are winged and the man appears as an angel.

If the Leipzig panel was fashioned after Christian models it merged two different well-known aspects of the messianic scenario: the coming of the Messiah, marked by the flanking four creatures as in Apocalypse,

⁶ See, e.g., Wischnitzer (1960), 23–25, who linked the medallions to Ezekiel and representations of the Evangelists, and the scales to the money changers in the Second Temple; on the relation to Christian sources, see also Narkiss's contribution in Katz (1964), 31.

⁷ The focus on these two aspects of the messianic era is especially typical in French gothic art. In German art of the thirteenth century, most pictorial treatments of the messianic period are concentrated on the resurrection of the dead.

⁸ Sed Rajna (1983), 32; Narkiss's contribution to Beit-Arié (1986), 81.

⁹ Katz (1964), 19.

on the one hand, and the Last Judgment, represented by the scales, on the other. However, the story is not that simple. Several peculiarities of the Leipzig panel show us that although the designer of this iconography was certainly aware of how Christian art dealt with the messianic era, he composed an image that can only be understood against the background of Ashkenazic culture and its very particular and specific ideas concerning it.

Let us begin with the small hunting motif on the top of the upper frame: a reddish hare is running from right to left, followed slowly by a heavy, tired hound standing, rather than running, desperately sniffing the ground as if he had lost his ability to smell and to hunt. This is a variation of the traditional hunting motif as an allegory of anti-Jewish persecution:¹⁰ based on an interpretation of the Song of Songs (2:7), a female deer, standing for Israel, is pursued by a gentile hunter and his dogs representing the non-Jewish persecutor. In other examples it is a hare that attempts to escape the hunter and his dogs.¹¹ In the Catalan Rylands Haggadah (ca. 1330; Fig. 4) the black and white dogs allude to the activity of the Dominicans, who saw themselves as “*Domini canes*,” the dogs of God, chasing the heretics.¹² Another Catalan haggadah shows an inversion of the traditional hunting scene that will occur in the messianic era: an enthroned hare is being served by a dog representing Christianity (Fig. 5).¹³

In the Leipzig Mahzor we are not yet there. The situation has changed, though: the hare is free and the hunting hound has lost his ability; he has been weakened, but is not yet in the serving position that will mark the final stage of the messianic scenario. This variation of the hunting motif thus shows an earlier stage, one in which the preconditions for the arrival of the Messiah are about to be fulfilled.

Israel Yuval has shown that around the year 1240, the turn of the millennium according to the Jewish calendar, messianic expectations were particularly fervent and, that the scholars of the time believed

¹⁰ The marginal motif in the Leipzig panel was understood as such by Katz (1964), 19; on hunting as a metaphor for anti-Jewish persecution in medieval Jewish literature, see Epstein (1997), 21–22; on the hunting motif in Jewish art, see Schubert (1984), 119–120; Ayali (1982), 262–263.

¹¹ Ayali (1982), 262–263. Epstein argues that the hare is rooted in a Christian defamatory symbol for the Jews, translated by the Jews into a positive image of themselves, Epstein (1997), 27.

¹² Schubert (1986–87), 251–252.

¹³ Schubert (1986–87), 250–251.

that the arrival of the Messiah would depend on certain preconditions.¹⁴ Detailed descriptions of the messianic era—the arrival of the Messiah, the preconditions to be fulfilled toward the coming of the Messiah—proliferated during these years. The first precondition was the restoration of Jewish political power or at least a massive Jewish presence in the Land of Israel. This idea had a particularly strong influence as it could be understood as an inversion of and a proper response to Crusader ideology. It is also conceivable that Crusader ideology was an impetus for the notion of the restoration of political power.

The second precondition was a massive movement toward repentance. A complex system of penance was developed in the twelfth century by the Ashkenazic pietists, in particular by R. Judah the Pious (d. 1217).¹⁵ During the thirteenth century his views were slightly modified by his disciple R. Eleazar of Worms (d. 1230), who made the concept more applicable for a broader circle of Jews.¹⁶ The pietists combined a well-defined moral system with mysticism and highly developed eschatological interest. Penance had a key role in the general Jewish messianic expectations, especially in the pietistic concept. The ultimate aim of the pietistic penitential system was a balance of sins and virtues, for they believed that without this balance the precondition for the coming of the Messiah would not be fulfilled.

R. Judah the Pious, whose attitude was, as scholars have shown,¹⁷ quite sectarian, took up the late antique concept of four types of penance. First penance for a sin by confronting the subject or object that triggered the sin, now without committing the same sin (*tshuvat haba'ah*); second penance by means of a safeguard (fence), that is, by avoiding the object or subject that caused the sin (*tshuvat hagader*); third penance of balance by means of suffering that the sinner takes upon him/herself, in order to equal out the weight of the sin (*tshuvat mishkal*); and fourth penance by means of the specific punishment mentioned in the Bible for a particular sin (*tshuvat hakatuv*).¹⁸ The concept as such is

¹⁴ Yuval (1998), 110.

¹⁵ Marcus (1981), chap. 3.

¹⁶ This process was described in detail by Marcus (1981), 120–128.

¹⁷ Marcus (1981), pt. 2; Soloveichik (1976), 330–331.

¹⁸ This terminology was developed in its final form only in the text of R. Elazar of Worms, *Sefer Harokeah* (1847), *Hilkhot Teshuvah*, par. 1–15, see Marcus (1981), 48–49; it is, however, rooted in the discussion of R. Judah, the Pious, in *Sefer Hassidim* (1891), par. 37–43.

not new,¹⁹ but R. Judah elaborated on it and explained that the aim of this penitential system was a balance of the divine scales of reward and punishment earned for acts of virtue and for sins. This idea of eschatological balance is the specific pietistic input into the original Talmudic concept. R. Judah the Pious and his father R. Samuel ben Kalonymus the Pious²⁰ before him discussed these modes and the manner in which virtues can balance sins in great length and detail.

As noted, R. Judah's attitude tended to be sectarian, and some of his concepts were not applicable to broader circles of the medieval Jewish population. Among these notions was the idea of a ritual of confession to a sage,²¹ which was never institutionalized. R. Eleazar reinterpreted his system, eliminating the idea of confession. This and other modifications informed the bases of pietistic thought. In Marcus's words: "...despite Judah's failure to forge German Jewry into a community of saints, R. Eleazar's adaptations of his teacher's innovations led to their incorporation into the mainstream of European Jewish piety."²² Different from R. Judah's system in which the sage plays a central role, R. Eleazar developed what Marcus calls a private penitential system, one that functions between the sinner and God.²³ Although the acts of penitence described by R. Eleazar were more severe than those discussed by R. Judah, the former had a much longer "afterlife," and a strong impact on most of the rabbinic literature of the centuries to come. His ideas are reflected in the writings of R. Isaac of Moses, R. Meir of Rothenburg, R. Jacob Weil, R. Israel Bruna, and others.²⁴

I do not claim here that the Leipzig Mahzor reflects a pietistic worldview in any particular way. As Kurt and Ursula Schubert suggested many years ago, it rather seems that the pietists, especially R. Judah, objected to the idea of figurative art.²⁵ Moreover, R. Judah formulated his ideas during the late twelfth and the early thirteenth century, and R. Eleazar was active during the early thirteenth century. Pietistic activity and writing came to an end around 1250, and the Leipzig Mahzor was

¹⁹ Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma*, 86a; for an English translation, see Neusner (2005), vol. 5, 336–339.

²⁰ R. Samuel the Pious, *Sefer Hayir'ah*, included as par. 1–13 of *Sefer Hassidim* (1891); for an analysis see Marcus (1981), 44–49.

²¹ Marcus (1981), 75–78.

²² Marcus (1981), 121.

²³ Marcus (1981), chap. 8.

²⁴ Marcus (1981), 128.

²⁵ Schubert (1984), 70–71 relying on *Sefer Hassidim*, Vistinetzky (1891), par. 1625.

illuminated approximately sixty years later. However, after the ground were prepared by R. Eleazar, some aspects of the pietistic concepts had a significant impact on intellectual developments within German Jewry for some time after 1250 and shaped Ashkenazic thought up to the sixteenth century and beyond.

The late-thirteenth-century southern French *Sefer Kol Bo*, for example, reflects this process from the sectarian trend of R. Judah via the more generally applicable concepts of R. Eleazar to the adoption of pietistic elements in much wider circles—even beyond Ashkenaz—quite clearly. A highly eclectic collection of customs, halakhic material, and texts by Maimonides, on the one hand, and by R. Eleazar, on the other, the *Sefer Kol Bo* describes the penitential process as follows:

Rabbi Simon, the son Lakish, said on behalf of Rabbi Simon, the son of Rabbi Yosse, and the Rabbanan: it is written (Ezek. 1:8) “and hands of a man were underneath their wings”; the interpretation is: underneath the wings of the four animals; in order to receive those who repent according to the law. His right hand is stretched out to receive those who repent and to avoid that they touch the Throne of Glory as it is written (Hos. 14:2): “return Israel to God, your Lord.” Those who repent reach a location where the ministering angels are not allowed to arrive...²⁶

A few lines later, the text focuses on God’s call for repentance:

Return Israel to God: take with you things and return to God...I gave you my law to fulfill the precepts and to adhere to it all your days in order to remember all the good I have done to you; I warned you not to sin before me and not to follow a foreign God in your uncircumcised, unclean heart...Return to me...because I created penance for you...because I loved you, son, return to the Lord with all your heart...and this is what means “his hand is stretched out to receive those who repent,” because the Holy One blessed be He embraces all those who repent and receives them as it is written (Song of Sg.: 2:6) “his right arm embraces me.”²⁷

In the text that follows this excerpt, first the four types of penance are described in detail, then a lengthy list of different kinds of sins is attached, and finally a long list of virtues or, rather, qualities that lead to virtue is added. The section concludes with a detailed description of the penitential process quoting the prescriptions made by R. Judah in

²⁶ *Sefer Kol Bo*, Vidavsky (1997), vol. 1, 266.

²⁷ *Sefer Kol Bo*, Vidavsky (1997), vol. 1, 266.

Sefer Hasidim,²⁸ whereas the rest of the text in *Sefer Kol Bo* is largely based on the works of R. Eleazar.

This is an elaboration of a late antique motif by means of the pietistic penitential system. Late antique interpretations of the Ezekiel vision (Ezek. 1:8) comment on the verse “the hand of a man underneath their wings...” as the hand of God who receives the penitent.²⁹ The text as reported in the *Sefer Kol Bo* combines this interpretation with the pietistic concept of penance.

Against the background of this concept, the Leipzig panel can be read as showing God—in terms of the *aleph-lamed* ligature—on the Throne of Glory. When the time comes, He will measure the weight of the sins and virtues and accept the penitent. The Throne is indicated only by the presence of the four creatures, whose representation, as noted earlier, differs from the Christian counterparts. On the one hand, their arrangement follows their mention in Ezekiel, but, on the other, their appearance does not correspond to the biblical text. According to Ezekiel’s description the overall appearance of each of them was of a man with four faces: that of a lion, an ox, an eagle, and a man. Here they appear, as was common in most artistic renderings, as separate beings. They also lack wings. The reason for this divergence from the biblical text lies in a halakhic restriction that refers in particular to the visualization of the tetramorph. A text in the thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century halakhic compilation *Orhot Hayyim* by R. Aaron Hakohen of Lunel, for example, quotes a *responsum* by R. Solomon ibn Adret of Barcelona (died c. 1310) and reads as follows: “It is forbidden to create the form of the four creatures as one figure with four faces, but creating one of them alone is not (forbidden).” After a few words of reservations concerning a figure of the man, we read a few lines later: “and that is why it is allowed to create the form of the lion, the eagle and the ox—each on its own.”³⁰ It is notable that halakhists brought up this subject at all, and it is probably an indication that artistic renderings of the visionary creatures were an issue.

In the Leipzig image the three animals—the lion, the ox, and the eagle—stand out as golden silhouettes against a blue-black background.

²⁸ *Sefer Kol Bo*, Vidavsky (1997), vol. 1, 267–272.

²⁹ Babylonian Talmud, *Pesahim* 119a, for an English version, Neusner (2005), vol. 4, 551.

³⁰ *Orhot Hayyim*, Schlesinger (1902), *Hilkhot Avodah Zarah* 7, 232–233. This text may have been written by the author of *Sefer Kol Bo* as the two are very close in content.

They are framed in golden medallions, perhaps to be understood as wheels, alluding to the visionary text in Ezek. 1:15: "...and I saw wheels on the ground, one beside each of the four." The man is rendered somewhat differently, as he is not shown as a silhouette, but as a colored figure wearing a rather simple hooded garment and holding, almost embracing, a book with two locks. He is not within a golden medallion, but rather is framed in red and blue. The background, not discernible in the photograph but traceable in the original, is silver. He is, therefore, as sublime as the animals, a fact that is underscored by the precious metals, either gold or silver, used in the color scheme, but he is clearly meant to be distinguished from them.

Jewish texts of various kinds, both mystical and traditionally exegetical, including those of the Ashkenazic pietists discuss the four creatures at considerable length and in great detail.³¹ On various occasions these discussions of the tetramorph merge with another tradition—that of the image of Jacob engraved in the Throne of Glory. The roots to this tradition lie in the Aramaic version of the dream of Jacob's ladder in the Jerusalem Talmud, which elaborates on the angels who climb up the ladder on the night of Jacob's dream to call their fellow angels to look at the figure whose image is engraved in the Throne.³² This motif later naturally entered the exegesis of Ezekiel's description of the Throne (Ezek. 1:26): "Above the vault over their heads there appeared, as it were, a sapphire in the shape of a throne, and exalted on the throne a form in human likeness."

There are two different traditions concerning this image of Jacob, which have been researched in depth by Eliot Wolfson.³³ One explains that the human form believed to be seated on the Throne (Ezek. 1:26) is that of Jacob,³⁴ and the other identifies the fourth creature of the Ezekiel vision, the man, with Jacob. The medieval midrashic text *Sekhel Tov* deals with the story of Jacob as follows:

Rabbi Hiyya Rabba and Rab Yannai, one says: they stepped up and down on the ladder and left him; the other says: they stepped up and down in order to stay next to Jacob... (In order to see) him whose image is

³¹ Issues of the chariot, the Throne of Glory, and the four creatures are discussed at length, e.g., by R. Eleazar of Worms, *Sode Razayah*, Eisenbach (2004), *Hilkhot Hamerkavah*.

³² *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*, Clarke (1984), Gen. 28:12.

³³ Wolfson (1995).

³⁴ Halperin (1988), 121; Wolfson (1995), 8.

engraved in the upper sphere, they stepped up and saw the fourth creature on the Throne of Glory, whose name is like his, Israel, and then they stepped down and found him sleeping....³⁵

Eleazar Hakallir refers to this tradition in a *kerovah* about the Throne of Glory to be read on New Year as early as the sixth or seventh century. Describing the four creatures, he refers to the man as “the image of the simple man (*tam*),”³⁶ choosing the words from the Book of Genesis that describe Jacob as a simple or mild man sitting in the tent as opposed to the wild Esau, the hunter. The expression “simple man” is frequently explained in rabbinic literature as a hint that Jacob enjoyed a rabbinic education and became a scholar.³⁷ Indeed the man in the Leipzig image is shown as a “simple man”: the book in his arms characterizes him as scholar and the somewhat stiff appearance of the hood, which thus looks like a hat, seems to identify him as a Jew. According to both these traditions Jacob exhibits divine characteristics. Whether based on the conception of a demiurge or the Metatron, Jacob emerges in these texts as a figure with divine features.

In conclusion: What at first sight appears to be a simple reproduction and juxtaposition of common Christian messianic motifs emerges as a rather sophisticated image of the Ashkenazic pietists’ penitential system. The pietistic campaign of penance prepares the world for one of the preconditions for the arrival of the Messiah: a balance between sin and virtue. This balance, measured by God himself on the Throne of Glory is indicated in the image by the even scales. The Throne of Glory features a likeness of the divine Jacob. At the same time the hound, the non-Jewish persecutor, has lost his power and senses Israel is free of him and able to establish its own power, another precondition for the coming of the Messiah.

³⁵ *Midrash Sekhel Tov*, Buber (1959), 141; see also Wolfson (1995), 8.

³⁶ Davidson (1924), vol. 2, no. 189; Goldschmidt (1970), vol. 1, 217; Wolfson (1995), 8.

³⁷ *Bereshit Rabbah*, Theodor and Albeck (1996), 63:9–10, vol. 2, 693; for an English version, see Neusner (1985), vol. 2, 360–361.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Leipzig Mahzor, Universitätsbibliothek, MS V1102/I, fol. 31v, southern Germany, ca. 1310, initial decoration for the *yozzer* to be read on the first special Sabbath.
- Fig. 2. Chartres Cathedral, western portal, ca. 1140–1150, Second Coming of Christ.
- Fig. 3. Bourges Cathedral, western portal, early thirteenth century, Last Judgment.
- Fig. 4. Rylands Haggadah, Manchester, John Rylands University Library, MS heb. 6, fol. 29v, Catalonia, c. 1330, marginal hunting motif.
- Fig. 5. London, British Library, MS Add. 14761, fol. 30v, Catalonia or southern France, ca. 1330, Bondage in Egypt, with marginal representation of the messianic era.

THE SEAL OF SOLOMON THE SCRIBE
THE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE ALBENC PENTATEUCH
OF 1340

Bezalel Narkiss

In honour of Elisabeth Revel-Neher, a friend, colleague, and former student, I offer here a study of a most intriguing Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, dated 1340, from the south of France, in an area later called the Dauphiné. I first saw the manuscript in 1964 in the Bodleian Library at Oxford,¹ while surveying the libraries of the British Isles for Hebrew illuminated manuscripts,² and was fascinated by the textual illustrations drawn by Shlomo, the scribe who executed the work.

¹ Ms. Oppenheim 14; see Neubauer (1886), No. 20; cf. Beit-Arié, (1994), No. 20; cf. the detailed description of the manuscript by Mordechai Glatzer and Malachi Beit-Arié in the Institute of Hebrew Palaeography in Jerusalem, No. C2, for which I am grateful to Michal Sternthal. I am most appreciative of the help I received from Prof. Aliza Cohen and Ariella Amar in writing this article, and to Christine Evans for making it readable.

² In 1963, while completing my Ph.D. dissertation at the Warburg Institute in London I was asked by the David Salomons Fund of the Mayer Memorial Foundation in Jerusalem to catalogue all Medieval Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in Great Britain. It was a task of unknown extent, which was given to me in collaboration with the art historian Dr. Rosy Schilling, through Dr. Moshe Spitzer of Jerusalem. Only after a five-year survey of all the Hebrew manuscripts in England, Scotland, and Ireland did we realize the enormity of the task we had undertaken. Instead of the couple of hundred manuscripts we assumed we had, we found over a thousand, some of them extraordinary, which then took us, with the help of some colleagues and students, many years to catalogue and study.

With financial support from the British and Israel Academies and recognition by the International Union of Academies, we planned the catalogue to include four different areas of Hebrew illumination: (1) the Oriental schools of Egypt, Persia, Yemen, and North Africa; (2) the Sephardi schools of the Iberian Peninsula; (3) the Ashkenazi schools of France and Germany; and (4) the Italian schools. However, for lack of funds only one volume *The Spanish and Portuguese Manuscripts* was published in 1982 by the Oxford University Press and the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Jerusalem. By then my collaborator Rosy Schilling had been killed in an automobile accident, and the catalogue was dedicated to her memory. This Ashkenazi manuscript was never published.

The Text

The manuscript consists of the Pentateuch, five Megillot, and the Haftarah. The biblical text in the centre of the page is flanked in the outer margin by the Aramaic Targum and in the inner margin by a commentary by Rashi (R. Shlomo Ytzhaki), the eleventh-century Rabbi of Troyes. It is also furnished with the Masorah *magna* and *parva* (Fig. 1).³

By the middle of the fourteenth century manuscripts with similar content were quite common in Ashkenazi circles in Germany and France, probably made for personal use in the synagogue for prayers on the Sabbath, when the weekly pericope was read, followed by the appropriate Haftarah, and when a specific Megillah was read on a festival, a feast, or a fast. Some manuscripts of this kind incorporated the Targum within the biblical text, verse by verse, the way in which the texts traditionally had been read since the second century. Since not all Pentateuchs include a commentary, it stands to reason that those that do have one were also used by people who wished to deepen their understanding of the text or educate their children at home.

³ *Codicology*: The manuscript was written on parchment, comprising II + I + 2 + 352 + II leaves, measuring ca. 320 × 255 mm; biblical text space (214–219) × (89–130) mm; text space with Targum and commentary 288 × (193–220) mm. The main text and the Targum were written in square Franco-Ashkenazi script; the biblical column in 28 lines per page on fols. 1–262v, and in two columns on fols. 263–351v for the Megillot and Haftarah. The Targum was written in the inner column in 48–50 lines, and the commentary, in semicursive script, in the outer column in 56–70 lines per page, sometimes extending to the top and bottom margins (e.g., fol. 288). The Masorah *magna* is in 3 lines on top and 4 at the bottom, and the Masorah *parva* between the columns is written in small square script. From a comparison of the script of the three columns, it is obvious that the principal scribe wrote the biblical text, the Targum, and the commentary. However, since the color of the ink in each column is somewhat different, it is possible that he wrote the columns at different times, starting with the biblical text, followed by the Targum, and then by the commentary. He designed the illustrations in conjunction with the commentary, after the biblical text and Targum were checked by the masorator, who probably vocalized them and passed the pages back to the scribe, who corrected the texts and added the missing parts. Pricking is noticeable in a few folios (e.g., fols. 32–39, 216–223, 244–247, and others). Ruling was done by plummet across a spread of two pages in 29 horizontal lines for the main text, 57 lines for the commentary, and 3 + 4 lines for the Masorah. Vertical ruling is 1 + 3 + 2 + 3 + 1. Gathered in 45 quires of eight leaves each, except for I (first folio missing) and XXXI with seven leaves (one leaf missing after fol. 262v with the last four words of Deuteronomy); quire XLII has two leaves only. There were catchwords in the lower-left corner of all the quires, some with illustrations, but many were cropped by a later binder.

The Making of the Manuscript

The date and origin of our manuscript is stated in its colophon:

Shlomo bar Eliezer Hayim Hacoen wrote the Pentateuch, Megillot and Haftarah for R. Moshe ben Yehudah, completed, on the 6th day of the second Adar, 5100 from the creation (6.2.1340), on Tuesday during the week when the pericope *Vayikra* (Leviticus) is read.⁴

In another colophon Shlomo repeats his and his late father's name, Eliezer, who was also a scribe nicknamed De[s]yaiia, from the town of l'Alben.⁵

It is difficult to know how to pronounce the nickname De[s]yaiia or De[s]yeie, although it was quite a common one during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in England and France, perhaps originating from the old French *Deus aye*, meaning "God help." It probably refers to Shlomo's father, since it follows his name Eliezer, which means "God is my help." Thus the name Eliezer and the nickname De[s]eiia, have the same meaning. Eliezer was also a scribe, since the term "Cohen the scribe" follows the nickname.⁶

⁴ On fol. 352, the colophon is written mostly in display script occupying the entire page:

חזק ונתחזק הסופר לא יוזק לא היום ולא לעו' / לעולם עד שיעלה חמור בסולם
יעקב אשר חל' / חלם בנל' ואע"י (ברוך הנותן ליעף כח ולאין אונים עוצמה ירבה)
אמן אמן אמן סלע. / אני שלמה בר' אליעזר / חיים הכהן הסופר זצ"ל (זכר צדיק
לברכה) / כתבתי וסיימתי זה החומ' [ש] / והפטרות וחמש / מגילות לר' משה בן
הנ"ר (הנכבד רבי) / יהודה זצ"ל לירח ואדר: (יום) ג' פרשה ויקרא שנת חמשת
אלפים ומאה לפרט / ליצירה המקום ברחמיו זרעו זרעו יזכהו / להגות בו
ויזכהו לבנים זכרים יהגו בתוכו ויקיים בו / מקרא שכתוב לא ימוש ספר הזה מפיך
והגית בו / יומם ולילה למען תשמור לעשות ככל הכתוב בו כי / אז תצליח את
דרכך ואז תשכיל:

Tuesday in the week of Pericope *Vayikra* in 5100 AC was the 6th day of second Adar.

⁵ On fol. 351v, at the end of Isaiah 66, the Haftarah for Shabbat and the beginning of the month:

ונתחזק לעולם לא יזק שלמה בר' אליעזר חיים / הכהן זצ"ל המכונה די[ש]אייא כהן
הסופר מעיר לאלבן [הסופר].

The letter ש (shin) in smaller script is above the first י (yod) and the term הסופר is added in small script at the end.

⁶ For a detailed discussion of the name *Diaia*, see Loewe (1930–32), vol. II, 166–169, n. 603; 346, n. 1529. Loewe remarks that the motto of William the Conqueror *Dax aie* has the same meaning; cf. Halévy (1884), 167; Loeb (1888), 299; Gross (1897), 269, 468; cf. Stokes (1913), 293, who equates *Diaia* with Eliezer; cf. Mordechai Glatzer and Malachi Beit-Arié in the above-mentioned (n. 1) description of the manuscript for the Hebrew Palaeography Project.

Following the colophon is an added rhymed poem composed anonymously in the year 1262, which Shlomo copied, possibly from a model that he was using.⁷ This earlier poem stresses the need to study the Torah and mentions the unknown author's daughters and son. Shlomo also marked his name with pen-drawn decorations in several places⁸: one of the significant marks is a hand holding a medallion surrounding a six-pointed star and inscribed with "the seal of King Solomon" (fol. 216; fig. 2).⁹ At the end of Exodus (fol. 119v; fig. 3) next to the depiction of the *ephod* with the stones of the *hoshen*, Shlomo states that he drew it according to the commentary by "R. Abraham bar Ytzhak, dean of the court of Lunel."¹⁰ Since the style of this drawing is similar to the rest of the illustrations, we assume that he was also the artist of the entire manuscript. However, the painted initial-word panels could have been coloured by a different artist. The masorator, who possibly also vocalized the text, was probably called Ytzhak Cohen, since these names frequently appear next to the Masorah.¹¹

The year 1340 given in the colophon is undoubtedly the date of the manuscripts, fitting the style of script as well as the pen-drawn decoration. The earlier date of 1262 refers to the poem and possibly to the model from which Shlomo the scribe copied.

⁷ The additional poem of 1262 asks God to save the author from his enemies, helping him, his daughters, and his son to prosper and continue to study the Torah:

אנא השם מחשבת אויבי הפר: וגמולם בראשם השב בלא כפר: / ותזכו בנותי להיות כבנות חפר: ובני יזכה לקיים אמרי שפר: / ומלא משאלות לבי והגיון: / והשב שבותי בלא חלום וחזיון: כי קלו ימי מרב תגיון: / ואתה אל אדני שמעני: הסר מעלי קללה שמעני: / ואם לא מספרך מחני: כי בכרתי מות מעני: / וחזק ואמץ ידי הרפות: בל יהיו עוד לאחר כפופות / ותזהיר אורי מיגון חליפות: ואהודך משירי בכנור ותופפות: / וללמד בזה נתחכמה והבה: כי קבע עתים לתורה חובה: / וגם זאת בשנת טובה לפרט מאלף שישי נכתבה: /

In a third colophon on fol. 345v at the end of the Haftarot of the Pentateuch (*Zot habrakha* in Joshua 1:1–18) he repeats his name, adding the two first and two last lines of the above poem:

חזק ונתחזק לעולם לא יוזק שלמה כהן הסופר: / אנא השם מחשבת אויבי הפר: / וגמולם בראשם השב בלא כפר: / ותזכו בנותי להיות כבנות חפר: ובני יזכה לקיים אמרי שפר: / וללמד בזה נתחכמה והבה: כי קבע עתים לתורה חובה: / וגם זאת בשנת טובה לפרט מאלף שישי נכתבה: /

On fol. 317 his name Shlomo bar Eliezer Hayim is written in quasi-acrostic.

⁸ E.g., fols. 10, 11, 44v, 83v, 203, 219, 235v, 248v, 259, 261, 262, and 270v (twice).

⁹ In Hebrew: חותמו של שלמה המלך.

¹⁰ In Hebrew: כאשר ציירתי למעלה. See description of fol. 119v below.

¹¹ "Ytzhak," e.g., on fols. 27, 87v, and 115. "Cohen," e.g., on fols. 103, 122v, 123, 182.

The name of Shlomo's town can be identified as the village of Albenc on the river Isère north of the town of Grenoble, in the region ruled from the eleventh century on by the counts of Vienne and not part of the Kingdom of France or the Holy Roman Empire.¹² Throughout the fourteenth century, when the Jews were repeatedly expelled from the Kingdom of France, they found havens in many lands, including the independent County of Vienne, later called the Dauphiné. In 1340 the Jewish communities prospered in the self-governing principalities in the south of France that did not belong to the French kingdom, including Provence, Burgundy, and the Papal State, as well as Vienne, and these were regarded by the Jews as stepping stones to settlement in Italy.¹³ There were good facilities for the prosperous Jews of southern France to commission illuminated manuscripts and for a school of copying and illumination to flourish there. On the evidence of some of the iconography and various elements of the style in these manuscripts, some of the scribes and illuminators may have come originally from the north.

In 1349, nine years after the completion of our manuscript, the crown prince (the *Dauphin*) of the new royal house of Valois bought the Principality of Vienne, and from then on the region, called the Dauphiné, belonged to French crown princes. The situation of the Jews in the area may have become precarious at that point, and some of them probably migrated to other regions or kingdoms, carrying their treasures with them. Be that as it may, according to owners' inscriptions our Pentateuch reached Italy in the fifteenth century and remained there until at least the seventeenth century. It then became the property of some Ashkenazi Jews, who inscribed their names as owners of the manuscript, the first of whom was in Frankfort-on-Main in 1705, after which it changed hands again. It was eventually acquired by the famous Rabbi David Oppenheim of Prague (1664–1736) early in the eighteenth century, and his enormous library was bought by the Bodleian Library in Oxford in 1829.¹⁴

¹² See Gross (1897), 269.

¹³ See Schwartzfuchs (2001), 288–289 (Hebrew).

¹⁴ *History of the Manuscript*: The earliest sale inscription appears in the lower part of fol. 352v: Ytzhak bar Abraham sold the manuscript to Shlomo bar R. Ytzhak Ashkenazi in Naples on 6th January 5246 (1486). At the bottom of fol. 352 below the colophon Shlomo records in a lengthy inscription the birth of his son Ytzhak on Saturday 1st Tammuz 5247 (23 June, 1487).

From then on at least until 1611 the manuscript remained in Italy. At the bottom of fol. 351v, below the poem of 1262, is a sale agreement: Abraham bar Hezekiah

The Decoration Programme of the Manuscript

The decoration programme of our Pentateuch corresponds to the Ashkenazi Franco-German style,¹⁵ which consists of decorated initial-

confirms that he sold the manuscript to Menahem bar Meshulam through Ovadia of Cesena (ציזינה) in northern Italy, south of Ravenna. Above this sale agreement is the signature of a well-known censor, a Jewish convert, who worked mainly in Venice and its vicinity: "Visto p[er] me Camillo Jaghel commissio del 1611." At the top of every folio between 1r and 44r are running titles of pericopes in a seventeenth-century square Ashkenazi script.

On fol. 352 above, on the left and within the colophon, is a seventeenth-century owner's inscription, written in Ashkenazi rabbinic cursive. In the top line are words that are difficult to understand, repeated twice. In Hebrew letters: קמובאיטבפוט קולפכמתייהן.

On the second line is a gift inscription to an important person, R. Aharon Baer Kazn[...?]. In Hebrew: ליד יאדוני ב'ב (בעל) אהרן בער כצנ[...?] (כבוד מורנו הרב רב) בריית[...?] האלוף והקצין הנ' [כבד] ושתדלן כמהרר.

The place and date of this inscription is below the display script of the colophon: Frankfort-on-Main, 1st of Elul 5465 (21.8.1705). In Hebrew: פרנקפורט דמיין יטא חד אלול תפה לפר'ט] פה הנ' [...?].

The difficult inscription of fol. 352 is copied again on the left, followed by the reversed Hebrew alphabet, written four times. In Hebrew: השרק צפעס נמלך יטחו והדג בא (which was at times used as the initials of some *piyyutim*). On fol. 351v above the text is another owner's inscription written in Ashkenazi rabbinic cursive, though by a different hand, below another reversed Hebrew alphabet. The writer is Moshe ben Shlomo Zalman. In Hebrew: נאום הכותב משה בן שלמה זלמן. On fol. 352v there are further owners' inscriptions written in Ashkenazi rabbinic-cursive that can barely be deciphered, except possibly: Israel Frankel.

During the early eighteenth century the manuscript reached David Oppenheim, the famous, learned and rich Rabbi of Prague and Bohemia, who had an enormous library. The eighteenth-century binding of white leather on cardboard, embossed and blind-tooled with geometric motifs and with vestiges of clasps, was probably done for him. Endpapers have an unidentified watermark of a crowned shield enclosing a clover leaf. It resembles one of 1656, with a fleur-de-lis in its center; see Heawood (1950), 101, pl. 224. Thanks are due to Michal Sternthal for this information. The flyleaf of the binding is a frontispiece etched on vellum, copied from the woodcut frontispiece of the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1712 by Abraham bar Jacob. This frontispiece, which was sometimes added to R. David Oppenheim's books, depicts Moses and Aaron in front of columns on either side of the page. On top, on a curtain ground are six medallions representing biblical scenes: the Expulsion, Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, Abraham and Melchizedek, Lot and his daughters, and Jacob's dream. Oppenheim's collection was bought by the Bodleian Library in 1829, catalogued as Opp. 14.

¹⁵ For example the Duke of Sussex Pentateuch, London British Library, Add. Ms. 15282, and the Regensburg Pentateuch, Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/52, both from around 1300; see Narkiss (1969), 31, pls. 29, 32.

word panels for the books¹⁶ and the pericopes,¹⁷ full-page miniatures,¹⁸ marginal text illustrations, and catchwords.¹⁹ However, some variations in our manuscript may point to a particular school of illumination in the south of France. Most marginal illustrations in manuscripts from Germany or northern France of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries are outlined by micrography of the Masorah *magna* text, whereas in our Albenc Pentateuch, as in others of the same school, the illustrations are pen-and-ink drawings interwoven within the commentary column or structured as *carmina figurata*. The many text illustrations were probably added to induce young members of the family, who may have been intrigued by the illustrations, to study the text of the Pentateuch and the commentary in order to understand their meaning.

The decorations of our Pentateuch can be divided into four types:

1. The text of the commentary column outlined and shaped as the classical *carmina figurata*.
2. Pen-drawn illustrations incorporated within the shaped text of the commentary.
3. Pen-drawn text illustrations in the outer margins or attached to catchwords.
4. Initial-word panels to some openings of books and pericopes.

The pen-drawn illustrations and the *carmina figurata* were drawn by one artist, a knowledgeable person, well acquainted with the meaning of the biblical and commentary texts, who integrated them visually in the margins or within the commentary columns. As noted earlier, the scribe of our manuscript was also the artist. There are many examples of the breadth and scope of his knowledge of the biblical text and commentary, most of which are direct illustrations of one or the other of the included texts and some are details alluding to them, while others refer to external texts.

¹⁶ In our manuscript on fols. 1 (Genesis; Fig. 1), 120 (Leviticus; Fig. 13), 263 (Esther), 270v (Song of Songs; Fig. 16), 277 (Lamentations).

¹⁷ In our manuscript on fols. 17, 91, 130, 190v, 263, and 270 all include text illustrations.

¹⁸ None in our manuscript.

¹⁹ Most of the catchwords in our manuscript were cropped by later binders; some are decorated with pen-and-ink drawings, e.g., fols. 7v, 15v (a rampant lion), 23v (three fish joined at their heads), 31v, and two illustrating the text, e.g., fols. 39v and 47v.

Condensed Narrative Illustrations

The depictions of alluding details may further imply that the artist drew them deliberately as a puzzle. One example is in the commentary column on fol. 14v, illustrating Abraham's covenant with God over the divided animals (Gen. 15). On top of the column is a shield alluding to God's words to Abraham: "I am your shield (your protector)" (Gen. 15:1); and at the bottom of the column is the head of a calf representing one of the sacrificed animals (Gen. 15:9–10). The shield and the calf's head are a condensed allusion to the scene.

A more intricate example is the *carmina figurata* rampant lion next to the biblical story of Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38, fol. 46v; Fig. 4). The allusion to Judah as a lion is related to another biblical text—Jacob's blessing of his sons, where he refers to Judah as a lion (Gen. 49:9). In the story of Judah and Tamar, he gives her his signet as a pledge (38:18). According to Rashi's commentary, following the Targum, our artist depicted a rampant lion, which commonly figured on seals used by both Jews and Christians during that period.²⁰

Many of Shlomo's illustrations are closely related to Rashi's commentary, such as the zigzag roads leading to Lot's house, which were taken by the angels who came to save him (fol. 18v). This is based on Rashi's understanding of the term "turn in (to my house)" (Gen. 19:2–3), which means that they did not go directly to Lot's house in order to mislead the Sodomites.²¹ Another example is the moon and the sun seen together on the morning that Sodom was destroyed (fol. 19v) on top of the commentary column, which is based on Rashi's interpretation of the verse "the sun has risen upon the earth" (Gen. 19:23–25). This points to the appearance of both sun and moon during the destruction of Sodom, stating that it was done in order to upset those Sodomites who worshipped the sun and those who worshipped the moon.²² Overturned gables and a gate are also depicted within the column.

The artist sometimes added pictorial allusions that do not appear in either text and point to his deep knowledge of the Jewish texts. Among these, for example, is the tetramorph cherub with a human face at the top of the ladder in Jacob's dream (fol. 32v; Fig. 17), alluding to the verse:

²⁰ See Bedos-Rezak (1981), 207–228; cf. Friedenberg (1987).

²¹ See description below.

²² In Hebrew: הלבנה עומדת ברקיע. Rashi's interpretation, based on the Midrash *Sechel Tov* to Gen. 19:15.

“And behold, the Lord stood above it” (Gen. 28:12–13). In order to avoid representing an image of God, Shlomo depicted one of the tetramorphs that, according to Ezekiel (1:5–28), carry the throne of God.²³

At times Shlomo illustrated a commentary from other texts, especially of the tosaphists, the Ashkenazi rabbis who followed Rashi.²⁴ One example is the diagram of the high priest’s *hoshen* (fol. 119v; Fig. 3), which follows the interpretation of R. Abraham ben Ytzhak of Montpelier (died c. 1315), dean of the court in Lunel.²⁵

Pentateuch Text Illustrations

There are no bounds to our scribe-artist’s imagination in illustrating the biblical stories. Shlomo’s original iconography is revealed both in elaborate scenes and in individual images. Examples of single figures and objects that shape the *carmina figurata* commentary column are the figure of the bearded Abraham, aged ninety-nine (fol. 16), illustrating Gen. 17:1; the tree of knowledge (fol. 3); the staff of Moses, which changed into a serpent and swallowed the staffs of Pharaoh’s magicians (fol. 72v; Fig. 5); and the more sophisticated chequered tower representing the towns built by Nimrod (fol. 10v).²⁶

Shlomo elaborated the shaped columns by introducing pen-and-ink drawings within the commentary column. A similar illustration of the towns built by Nimrod is the chequered tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3–4; fol. 11; Fig. 6); but our artist interwove the workers within the continuous bricklike structure.²⁷ This depiction is innovative and no other similar representations of this subject are known from any other Hebrew or Latin manuscript. Another example of a narrative scene is Ishmael shooting an arrow at a bird perched on a tree in the margin (Gen. 21:21; fol. 21; Fig. 7). This depiction may allude to Rashi’s commentary on “Hagar’s son mocking” or “playing” with Sarah’s son Isaac

²³ See description of fol. 32v and Fig. 17 below.

²⁴ See Urbach (1980), especially Chapters I and II, relating to Rashi and his pupils.

²⁵ See description of below. Another drawing based on a text by a tosaphist illustrates the eight spies carrying the cluster of grapes back from Canaan (Num. 13, fol. 181v; Fig. 14).

²⁶ Others are the dragon-shaped serpent (fol. 3v); the dreams of the butler and the baker (fols. 49 and 49v); Moses’ burning bush (fol. 67v); and many more.

²⁷ Other examples are the rainbow in the clouds drawn within the column (fol. 9v); the moon still visible on the morning when Sodom was destroyed (fol. 19v); and the ladder of Jacob’s dream with a tetramorph on the top (fol. 32v, fig. 17).

(Gen. 21:9), which implies that Ishmael shot at Isaac while they were playing in the field. This explanation serves as an excuse for sending Hagar and Ishmael away at Sarah's demand, as depicted in the two following episodes. To the right of a bush-shaped *carmina figurata* commentary is the well with a bucket that Hagar found with God's guidance, while at the top Hagar in the desert is pouring water into the mouth of Ishmael, who is sitting under a tree-shaped commentary column (Gen. 21:19; fol. 21v; fig. 8).

In contrast to a column in the shape of a bush or tower, the artist designed outlined figures and filled them with the commentary text. One of these sophisticated examples is Esau, acceding to Isaac's request to hunt and cook him a tasty meal, shooting an arrow into the neck of a stag shaped in *carmina figurata* within the commentary (Gen. 27:3–4; fol. 30; Fig. 9). The bottom of this shaped column is flanked by Rebecca, who loves Jacob, ordering him to fetch a young goat, seen at the opposite side.

Marginal Pen-Drawn Illustrations

Most of the depictions are marginal pen-and-ink drawings illustrating a word or an episode: for example, the hooded Jacob rolling a stone away from the well in Haran with the help of a shepherd (Gen. 29:10; fol. 33, Fig. 10), where, contrary to the biblical text, Jacob is rolling the stone away by himself; and the cluster of grapes carried back from Canaan by eight individuals (Num. 13; fol. 181v; Fig. 11).²⁸ A few of the marginal illustrations are framed within a trefoil arch, such as the Sacrifice of Isaac (fols. 22v; Fig. 12, and on fol. 120; Fig. 13), and Eliphaz the son of Esau robbing Jacob (fol. 33; Fig. 10).

Of special interest are the text illustrations attached to catchwords, mostly cropped. Examples are Jacob doing battle with the angel (fol.

²⁸ Other noteworthy drawings are: a fierce animal, which might have devoured Joseph (fol. 46); Pharaoh's dream of the seven ears of corn (fol. 51); the plagues of blood, frogs, lice, beasts, boils, and darkness (fols. 73, 73v, 74, 74v, 75, 75v, and 78, respectively); a dog that did not bark at the Israelites coming out of Egypt (fol. 78v); Pharaoh's drowning horse (fol. 83); Miriam playing a timbrel and a flute (fol. 84v); the diagram of the *hoshen*, where Shlomo states that he drew it (fol. 119v; Fig. 12); the fear of the beasts who might grow stronger upon the Israelites (fol. 228); Phinehas carrying his lance (fol. 240v); a heraldic eagle (fol. 253); and a crouching stag at the end of Song of Songs (fol. 273v).

39v; Fig. 14); a black Ishmaelite selling Joseph to Potiphar (fol. 47v), or the Amalekites fighting the Israelites (fol. 87v).

Initial-Word Panels

The initial-word panels were modeled after Franco-German Hebrew illuminated manuscripts of the same period, though drawn and painted in the style of our scribe-artist: for example, the architectonic panel of Genesis (fol. 1; Fig. 1), formed of a horseshoe arch filled with red hatching on a blue ground. Above is a gable surmounted by a fleur-de-lis, resting on two pillars decorated with a plaited motif, as well as foliate bases and tops. The shape of the arch resembles the initial-word panel of Numbers in the De Castro Pentateuch of 1344 (Fig. 15).²⁹

The Origins of Shlomo's Illustrations

South German Schools of Illumination

Apart from the initial-word panels, the Franco-German influence is noticeable in some iconographical and compositional elements of the text illustrations, which may have been known to Shlomo. For example, the Sacrifice of Isaac illustrates the initial word of Leviticus (fol. 120; Fig. 13) dealing with sacrifices, and it is similarly attached to Leviticus in the Ambrosian Bible from southern Germany of 1236–1238.³⁰ However, in our manuscript the scene also appears next to its text (fol. 22v; Fig. 12). The two representations share similar iconographical elements with the same scene in the Brabant Pentateuch of 1310, copied by a scribe who may have come originally from Ochsenfurt on the river Main (Fig. 16).³¹ In all three representations Isaac is lying naked, supine on the altar with his hands and legs tied, based on Rashi's commentary, following a midrash (*Tanhuma*, *Vayera*, 23) explaining the term "bound"

²⁹ Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/94, fol. 206, initial-word panel of Numbers; see Benjamin (1979).

³⁰ Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Ms. B. 30 Inf, fol. 102v; see Ottolenghi (1972), 119–125, pl. 13.G.

³¹ Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Levi 19, fol. 34v. The illuminated colophon on fol. 624v states that the scribe Isaac in the county of Brabant is the son of Elijah, a cantor from Ochsenfurt on the Main (בארץ ברבן אני יצחק הסופר בר (אליהו חזן מאוכסנפורט).

as meaning with his hands and legs tied together like an animal for sacrifice.³² The bearded Abraham is wearing a hood and holding Isaac's hair with his left hand. However, in our manuscript he holds a knife in his right hand, whereas in the Brabant Pentateuch he holds a sword. The torso of the winged angel is inclined toward the ram, which is caught in a thicket with entwined roots.

The *carmina figurata* technique, in which our scribe-artist excels, also has some antecedents in Franco-German Hebrew manuscripts. The most prominent among these are the Tripartite Mahzor (ca. 1320) from the Lake Constance region, in which geometrical, floral, and fleur-des-lis motifs appear in the commentary column,³³ and the Hayyim D'Quopdana Pentateuch, where the *carmina figurata* resemble some shapes in our manuscript³⁴: for instance, on fol. 94 the *carmina figurata* commentary is shaped as two addorsed dragons with pen-drawn heads and long ears similar to the dragons in our Pentateuch on fols. 3v and 72v; Fig. 5.

The combination of pen-and-ink drawings and *carmina figurata* is also found later in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the Franco-German Ashkenazi realm.³⁵ Moreover, the panels of two Megillot in our Pentateuch, Esther (fol. 263) and Song of Songs (fol. 270v; Fig. 18), decorated with pen-drawn Franco-German motifs show traces of pinpricks, which indicate that they were copied from a similar model, though not necessarily from corresponding book panels.

Apart from his knowledge of Hebrew manuscripts, Shlomo may have been influenced by Christian illustrations: for example, the human-faced tetramorph at the top of Jacob's ladder (fol. 32v; Fig. 17).

³² The Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbath*, 54a) relates an argument as to how Isaac was bound: one hand and one foot together behind his back, or hands together and feet together.

³³ The three parts of the mahzor are housed in three libraries: vol. I, Budapest, Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Kaufmann Collection, Ms. A384, e.g., fols. 56v, 57, 99v, 100, 207v, 208; vol. II, London, British Library, Add. Ms. 22413, e.g., fols. 15v, 16; vol. III, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Mich. 619, e.g., fols. 113v, 143v; see Shalev-Eyni (2001), 302, 307–8, 310, respectively; cf. Narkiss (1968), 125–133, figs. 30–33.

³⁴ London, British Library, Or. Ms. 2696.

³⁵ One manuscript of the late fourteenth century is an abridged Talmud by R. Isaac Alfasi with Rashi's commentary with grotesque dragons shaped as *carmina figurata*, though not illustrating the text. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, héb. 311; see Garel (1991), 145–48 (no. 106). Garel thinks that it is originally from Prague; cf. Sed-Rajna (1994), 236–238 (no. 92). Sed-Rajna mentions another manuscript of Isaac Alfasi, with geometrical *carmina figurata*, in Paris: héb. 313, see *ibid.*, 324–226 (no. 92).

Southern French Manuscripts

There are manuscripts executed in the south of France during the fourteenth century that were decorated with *carmina figurata* and pen-and-ink drawings, though mostly they lack Shlomo's imagination and connection to Rashi's commentary. Among these are three Pentateuchs in the British Library³⁶ with the Targum and Rashi's commentary on either side of the biblical text, as well as the Megillot and Haftarat. All three have *carmina figurata* illustrations of the commentaries, as well as marginal pen-and-ink drawings. The closest is the Multi-Scribe Pentateuch, copied by three scribes: Hayyim, Shmuel bar Hayyim, and Yosef.³⁷ The winged dragon with long ears (fol. 133v) is similar to Moses' staff-dragon in our manuscript (fol. 72v; Fig. 5). Like the other manuscripts of this group, the Multi-Scribe Pentateuch has some Franco-German elements, such as initial-word panels (e.g., fols. 7 and 57) and illustrations outlined in micrography,³⁸ as well as some typical Franco-German grotesque dragons (e.g., fols. 43v and 50v).

Shlomo's use of pen-and-ink drawings rather than shapes outlined in micrography may resemble other manuscripts out of the south of France, mainly from Provence. However, unlike our manuscript, the style of these Provençal drawings, which were sometimes coloured, was influenced by the art of northern Spain or Lombardy. The southern French works do not constitute an iconographical school, but are rather a group of manuscripts characterized by their innovative iconography and are thus similar to our Pentateuch. Examples are some fourteenth-century illuminated Haggadot from Avignon and its environs, one being the Sassoon Spanish Haggadah,³⁹ written in Sephardi script and decorated with colored pen-drawn initial-word panels, with some special and innovative iconography.⁴⁰

³⁶ Add. 26878; Harley 5709 and Harley 1861.

³⁷ London, BL, Add. 26878. More examples of *carmina figurata* are the hangings of the Tabernacle (fol. 105), a spread eagle (fol. 191v), a slaughtering knife (fol. 194v), a grotesque camel (fol. 199), and two grotesque human heads (fol. 305). Among the pen-and-ink drawings are a dog (fol. 49v), a sacrificial goat (fol. 161v), a bird with a frog in its beak, and some diagrams, including the plan of the Land of Canaan (fol. 205).

³⁸ Such as the seven-branched menorah (fol. 107v); the high priest's miter (fol. 110v) and the Ark of Covenant (111v).

³⁹ Now in Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/41; see Narkiss (1969), 62, pl. 11.

⁴⁰ Another manuscript is the Schocken Haggadah (formerly Jerusalem, Schocken Collection, Ms. 24085, now in an unknown private collection), which shows the influence of an artist from Lombardy, though some of its iconography is of Spanish origin; see Narkiss (1953); Zirlin (1986/87), 55–72; Sternthal (2006). A third manuscript of the late

Description and Iconography of the Illustrations

Most of the illustrations in our Pentateuch—no fewer than fifty-one—are in the book of Genesis; Exodus has nineteen, and the rest of the books have five, seven, and six illustrations, respectively.

Genesis

The architectonic initial-word panel of Genesis on fol. 1 (Fig. 1) is placed above the three text columns. The green painted initial-word is written in a panel of red penwork scrolls. It is set under a wide lobed arch filled with red hatching on a blue ground. Above is a gable surmounted by a fleur-de-lis in red and yellow, resting on two pillars decorated with a plaited motif as well as foliate bases and crests. The shape of the arch resembles the initial-word panel of Numbers in the De Castro Pentateuch from Germany of 1344 (Fig. 15)⁴¹; however, the style and motifs differ, since our arch lacks the fantastic animals that decorate the De Castro arch, which are typical of the thirteenth- and fourteenth-century schools of Hebrew illumination in Franconia.

The story of the temptation in the Garden of Eden is illustrated by three consecutive motifs next to the text. The *carmina figurata* illustrations start on fol. 3, depicting the Tree of Knowledge with roots and branches (Gen. 2:17) along the whole commentary column. Another small pen-drawn tree extends to the bottom margin from the final letters of the words of the biblical text “tree of the garden” (Gen. 3:1).⁴² This is followed on fol. 3v by an abbreviated scene of the temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1–5) depicting in *carmina figurata* the serpent as a dragon without legs,⁴³ but with an open mouth and long ears, a depiction similar to that of the dragon-serpent into which Moses transformed his staff (fol. 72v; Fig. 5). The serpent depicted as a dragon probably follows Rashi, who equates the serpent with a dragon in his commentary to the Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Batra*, 16b.⁴⁴

fourteenth century is the Wolf Haggadah (now in Jerusalem, National and University Library, Ms. Octavo, 7246), with pen-and-ink drawings in Italian style; see Kaufmann (1892), 65–77; Garel (1975), 22–27; Zucker (1997), 4–13; Keinan (2004).

⁴¹ See n. 29 above.

⁴² In Hebrew: עץ הדעת.

⁴³ According to Rashi's commentary on Gen. 3:14 the serpent had legs, which were cut off.

⁴⁴ I am grateful to Ariella Amar for this reference.

On fol. 9v, within the commentary column, a rainbow is drawn as a semicircle surrounding a stylized cloud (Gen. 9:11–17). In the right outer margin is a hand pointing to an inscription: “This is the cloud and the rainbow (proving that God is) faithful to his covenant and fulfills his vow, thus said the Lord who remembers the covenant.”⁴⁵ In the lower part of the column are two stylized leaves alluding to the vineyard planted by Noah (Gen. 9:20).

The top of the commentary column on fol. 10 is shaped like a large jar with a handle and a spout pouring wine into the goblet of Noah (Gen. 9:21). On fol. 10v a gabled chequered tower in *carmina figurata* with a closed door takes up the entire commentary column, illustrating the cities built by Nimrod of Babylon, the grandson of Ham, Noah’s great-grandson (Gen. 10:8–13).

The following page (fol. 11) also depicts a building formed by *carmina figurata* in the commentary column—the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:3–4, fig. 6), shown as a chequered brick wall constructed in a most original way. Four workers are entwined between the bricks: at the top is a man reaching up with his left arm and pointing with his right at a woman climbing steps with a basket of bricks on her head. Between them is inscribed: “This is the tower of the ‘Divided Generation.’”⁴⁶ Below them there is a hooded workman raising a hoe over a built-up corner, and another man further down is holding a vertical plumb line. The inscription reads: “These are bricks.”⁴⁷ This interesting iconography, which is not known to me from any other Hebrew or Latin manuscript, may be the scribe-artist’s own invention. In the outer margin is a plant marking the scribe’s name Shlomo.

The commentary column depicting God’s covenant with Abraham over the divided animals (Gen. 15) on fol. 14v has a shield on top in *carmina figurata*, literally illustrating God’s words: “I am your shield (protector)” (Gen. 15:1). At the bottom of the column there is a drawing of a calf’s head, alluding to the divided animals that Abraham sacrificed to seal the covenant (Gen. 15:9–10). Another calf’s head protrudes from the last line of the Targum column.

⁴⁵ In Hebrew: זה הענן והקשת, נאמן בבריתו וקיים בשבועתו, כִּאֲ (כה אמר) השם. זוכר הברית.

⁴⁶ In Hebrew: זה מגדל דור הפלגה. The term is based on the Mishnah, *Sanhedrin*, 10:3.

⁴⁷ In Hebrew: זה לבינים.

On fol. 16 the full-profile figure of Abraham as an old man of ninety-nine (Gen. 17:1) shapes the entire commentary column in *carmina figurata*. He has a large head, a large eye, and a long beard and he is wearing a long tunic with a hood; his shod feet extend below the bottom of the column.

A small initial-word panel within the biblical text starting the pericope *Vayera* (Gen. 18) on fol. 17 is one of the few decorated initial words of a pericope. It is painted yellow, strewn with triple red dots, and framed in green and red. A green and red foliate bar extends along the main text column.

The story of the destruction of Sodom and the saving of Lot is depicted on five consecutive folios. On fol. 18 a tower similar to the one on fol. 10v, but with a bolted door, illustrates the inhospitality of the Sodomites before the city was destroyed (Gen. 18:20–21). The two angels who came to destroy Sodom are depicted on fol. 18v as two outspread foliate wings above the commentary column. Within the column are zigzag roads leading to Lot's house. This illustrates Rashi's explanation of the term "turn in (to my house)" (Gen. 19:2–3) meaning that they should go by indirect ways, so that the Sodomites will not realize where these strangers are going.⁴⁸ On fol. 19v Sodom's destruction is depicted by a crescent of the moon and a star above the commentary column, which incorporates an upside-down gate and overturned gables. The star probably represents the sun next to the moon, which, according to Rashi's interpretation of the verse "the sun has risen upon the earth" (Gen. 19:23), means that Sodom was destroyed at a time when both the sun and the moon appeared together in the sky. He states that this was in order to disquiet those Sodomites who worshipped the sun and those who worshipped the moon.⁴⁹ Accordingly, the inscription next to the moon with a star reads: "The moon is standing in the sky."⁵⁰ On fol. 20 a small covered jar with a handle and spout is shown pouring wine into a large goblet within the column, illustrating Lot's daughters making their father drunk (Gen. 19:31–35). Another covered jug held by a man is depicted above of the commentary column on fol. 20v. Since this has

⁴⁸ In Hebrew: סורו, ויסורו. Rashi's interpretation is based on the midrash in *Genesis Rabbah*, 50:7–8, according to R. Huna.

⁴⁹ Rashi's interpretation, based on the Midrash *Sechel Tov* to Gen. 19:15.

⁵⁰ In Hebrew: הלבנה עומדת ברקיע.

no connection to the story of Abimelech told on this page (Gen. 20), it may relate to Lot's second daughter making her father drunk.⁵¹

The story of Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, is depicted in three episodes on two consecutive folios. The first (fol. 21; Fig. 7) shows Ishmael the archer (Gen. 21:21) enclosed by a semicircle within the commentary column, shooting an arrow at a bird perched on a tree in the margin. It may also allude to Rashi's commentary on "Hagar's son mocking" or "playing with" Sarah's son, Isaac (Gen. 21:9), which implies that Ishmael shot at Isaac while they were playing in the field, which served as an excuse for sending Hagar and Ishmael away at Sarah's demand. Another semicircle in the commentary column encloses part of a verse omitted by the scribe and added between the text and the commentary columns, interrupting the flow of the Masorah *parva*. This may indicate that the commentary and the Masorah *parva* were written after completion of the biblical text and its correction possibly by the vocalizer.

On fol. 21v (Fig. 8) to the right of a bush-shaped *carmina figurata* commentary is a pen-drawn scene of Hagar pouring water from a waterskin into the mouth of her seated son Ishmael, who is near death, inscribed "and she gave the lad to drink."⁵² Below is the draw well with a bucket that she found with the guidance of God (Gen. 21:19). The tree-shaped commentary indicates the shrub under which Hagar left Ishmael (Gen. 21:15).

The pen-drawn sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:9–13) is framed by a trefoil arch at the bottom of the commentary column on fol. 22v (Fig. 12). Isaac, dressed, is lying on his back on a structured altar with his hands and legs tied together behind his back. Abraham, bearded and wearing a hood, is holding Isaac's head down with his left hand and has a knife in his right. The torso of a winged angel appears above the altar inclined downward toward the right, where a ram is caught in a thicket with intertwined roots. A similar depiction appears at the beginning of the book of Leviticus on fol. 120 (Fig. 13), although there Isaac's hands and legs are tied separately in front. The illustration is based on Rashi's commentary, following a midrash (*Tanhuma, Vayera*, 23), explaining

⁵¹ A jar and a goblet are also depicted on folio 10, representing the drunken Noah (Gen. 9:21), though the jar shapes the column, whereas the goblet is pen-drawn.

⁵² Gen. 21:19: ותשק את הנער.

the term “bound” as meaning with his hands and legs tied together like an animal for sacrifice.⁵³

On fol. 23v is the Cave of Machpelah, where Abraham buried Sarah (Gen. 23:9), showing four tomblike structures with gabled roofs, inscribed as “cave to (instead of ‘cave of’) Machpelah.”⁵⁴ At the bottom of the page next to the cropped catchword are two (originally three) fish sharing one head.

The story of Abraham’s servant finding Rebecca is illustrated in three episodes on consecutive folios. On fol. 24v the commentary is shaped in *carmina figurata* as an elongated amphora with four circular bulges, representing the water jar that Rebecca offered to Abraham’s servant (Gen. 24:15). The sequel on fol. 25v shows the *carmina figurata* commentary shaped as a camel, one of those with Abraham’s servant at the well (Gen. 24:30). The following text illustration on fol. 26 relates to Abraham’s servant telling Rebecca’s parents the story of his miraculous meeting with Rebecca, who gave him water and watered his camels, and ends with him giving Rebecca a nosering and bracelets (Gen. 24:46–47). This is illustrated by a *carmina figurata* shaped pitcher on top of the commentary column, below which are three roundels representing the ring and the bracelets. The story ends on fol. 26v with the servant giving presents to Rebecca and her family before she goes with him to meet Isaac (Gen. 24:53), but the commentary column shaped as two birds pecking at a fleur-de-lis may be unrelated to this episode.

The controversy between Esau and Jacob over the blessing from their father, Isaac, is depicted in two episodes on fol. 30 (Fig. 9). The top of the commentary column shows the hairy Esau shooting an arrow into the neck of a stag eating a leaf off a branch in *carmina figurata*. Esau is thus carrying out Isaac’s request to go hunting and cook him a tasty meal, so that he might bless him (Gen. 27:3–4). Inscribed: “This is Esau catching the game.”⁵⁵ In the lower part of the commentary is Rebecca planning to disguise Jacob as Esau, in order for him to obtain blind Isaac’s blessing (Gen. 27:9–13). The drawing shows Jacob wearing

⁵³ The Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbath*, 54a) relates an argument as to how Isaac was bound: each hand and foot together behind his back, or hands together and feet together.

⁵⁴ In Hebrew: מערת למכפלה.

⁵⁵ In Hebrew: זה עשו לוכד ציד.

a hood and standing near Rebecca, who points to a kid to the right of the commentary, inscribed “Rebecca loves Jacob.”⁵⁶

Iconographically important is Jacob’s dream (Gen. 28:12–13) on fol. 32v (Fig. 17), where the *carmina figurata* commentary column is shaped like a ladder with five rungs, inscribed twice: “This is a ladder.”⁵⁷ Standing on two human feet, the ladder is topped by a pen-drawn eight-winged human head with two feet below them, recalling the four-winged cherubim (the tetramorph) on top of the Ark of the Covenant in mid-Byzantine illustrations.⁵⁸ No example of the latter fits the eight-winged creature on top of our ladder. The closest images are the cherubim depicted as a head surrounded by six wings above the Ark of the Covenant in the British Library Hebrew Miscellany (ca. 1280), probably from the north of France,⁵⁹ which may point to a possible locale for the model of our cherub. Two cherubim with a single head surrounded by four wings are above the Ark of the Covenant in the twelfth-century Homilies of Jacobus Kokkinobaphos in the Vatican Library and may indicate an earlier Byzantine representation.⁶⁰ On the other hand, the cherubim depicted in Sephardi Hebrew Bibles from neighbouring Catalonia are mostly bi-winged human-bodied angels, which may go back to an early Jewish tradition.⁶¹ Since these creatures have the task of bearing God’s throne and glorifying him, our image

⁵⁶ In Hebrew: רַבֵּקָה אוֹהֶבֶת אֶת יַעֲקֹב.

⁵⁷ In Hebrew: זֶה סֻלָּם.

⁵⁸ The images are based on Ezekiel’s four-faced living creatures that carry the throne of God (Ezek. 1:5–28), Isaiah’s six-winged seraphs (Isa. 6:2–3), and St. John’s vision of the four creatures each with six wings (Rev. 4: 6–8).

⁵⁹ London, British Library, Add. Ms. 11639, fol. 522; see Revel-Neher (1998), fig. 79. For grouping the different series of illustrations according to style, see Sed-Rajna (1982), 18–30; cf. Metzger, vol. 38 (1985), 59–290; vol. 39 (1985), 221. For other considered ateliers see Zirlin (2003), 135–161, and for the provenance of the original manuscript in the Street of the Jews (*Jurue*) in Metz see Garel (2003), 27–37.

⁶⁰ Cod. gr. 1162, fol. 133v; see Revel-Neher (1998), 24–25, pl. 6, and cf. Chérubins in her General Index. For comparison of the other type of cherubim with four faces in Byzantine art see *ibid.*, pls. 1, 2, 5, and figs. 3, 8–10, 12, 31–37, 45–47; cf. Revel-Neher (1982), 6–17.

⁶¹ See Revel-Neher (1998), pl. 7b, figs. 58, 59, 60, 66a, 70, 75, 76, also in the Sarajevo Haggadah, fig. 87, and in the Ashkenazi Regensburg Pentateuch, fig. 81. The cherubim with two wings also appear in the ninth-century apse mosaic in the Theodulf Oratory at Germigny-des-Prés, see Revel-Neher (1984), fig. 87; as well as in other Jewish and Christian objects from the second century on; see Revel-Neher, *ibid.*, figs. 2, 25, 26, 53, 55, 74, 77. They appear in the same way in the Ashburnham Pentateuch, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2334, fol. 27v, see Narkiss (2007), 375, pl. 32.

may represent one of the angels who carried His throne taking the place of God on top of the ladder (Gen. 28:13).

Two more episodes relating to Jacob appear on fol. 33 to the left of the geometrical shaped commentary column. Above is the hooded Jacob, who, with the help of another shepherd, is rolling the stone away from the well for Rachel to water her flocks. This is contrary to the biblical text (Gen. 29:10), which says that he rolled it away alone, without help. Two sheep are standing below the well. In the lower part (Fig. 10), framed by a trefoil arch, is a midrashic scene of Jacob giving a bracelet and his money to the armed Eliphaz, Esau's son. According to the story, Esau ordered his son to kill Jacob on his way to Haran. The scene illustrates Rashi's interpretation of Gen. 29:11 stating that the reason Jacob cried when he kissed Rachel was that he had no jewelery to give her, since he had given it all to Eliphaz. Eliphaz could not bring himself to kill Jacob, since he had been brought up by Isaac, his grandfather and Jacob's father, so he asked Jacob what he should do instead and yet carry out his father's order. Jacob answered that he should take whatever he possessed, since being poor is considered the same as being dead.⁶² Jacob and Eliphaz are identified by inscribed names above their heads.

On fol. 39v in the bottom margin, next to the partly cropped catchword is a drawing of Jacob wrestling with a winged angel (Gen. 32:24; Fig. 14). On fol. 46 at the bottom of the commentary column is a drawing of a wild beast with an open mouth, referring to Jacob's thought when he saw Joseph's bloody garment that an evil beast had devoured him (Gen. 37:33).

The commentary in the shape of a rampant lion on fol. 46v (Fig. 4) alludes to Judah's involvement with Tamar (Gen. 38), to whom he gave his signet as a pledge for sending her a kid as payment for lying with her (38:16–18). The lion is identified with Judah, according to Jacob's blessing of his sons (Gen. 49:9), and may have been interpreted by our artist as the animal engraved on Judah's signet, as suggested by Rashi following the Targum. Rampant lions engraved on a seal were commonly used by Jews as well as Christians during this period.⁶³

⁶² In Hebrew: לפי שרדף אליפז בן עשו במצות אביו אחריו להורגו והשיגו, ולפי שגדל אליפז בחיקו של יצחק משך ידו. אמר לו מה אעשה לציווי אבא, אמר לו יעקב טול אליפז בממו' [שבידי, ועני חשוב כמת]. This is based on the early *Midrash Agadah* on Genesis, see Buber (1894), 28:5. The term "A poor man is considered dead" is based on the Babylonian Talmud, *Nedarim*, 64b. I am grateful to Ariella Amar for these references.

⁶³ See n. 20 above.

The story of Joseph in Egypt is depicted in five episodes, mostly on consecutive folios. In the lower margin of fol. 47v is a fragmentary illustration probably of Joseph being sold by the Ishmaelites to Pharaoh's servant Potiphar (Gen. 39:1), as related at the end of the text column (the catchword is missing). What is left is a cropped drawing of a beast-like black man's head, possibly one of the Ishmaelites.

Three dreams are shown in the following commentary columns. On fol. 49 the column is shaped like a foliate scroll with two vine leaves, two clusters of grapes, and a flower drawn below, illustrating the butler's dream (Gen. 40:9–10). The top part of the commentary column on fol. 49v represents the fulfillment of the butler's dream (Gen. 40:11), shaped as a goblet held by a drawn hand, with two other hands pressing a bunch of grapes above the goblet. The baker's dream (Gen. 40:16–17) is illustrated by two baskets, one on top of the other, in the lower part of the shaped column. Seven upright ears of corn, illustrating Pharaoh's dream of the fat and lean ears of corn (Gen. 41:5–7), are on fol. 51 above the geometrically shaped commentary column.

A pitcher, probably illustrating the silver cup put in Benjamin's sack by Joseph's steward (Gen. 44:1–12), is drawn above of the commentary column on fol. 56.

An additional illustration based on Rashi's commentary is on fol. 58v, where the lower part of the commentary column is shaped like the horned head of a heifer showing its tongue, illustrating the beheaded calf (Deut. 21:1–9). Rashi's commentary on Gen. 45:27: "And they told him (Jacob) all Joseph's words... and he saw the wagons which Joseph sent," reminded Jacob of the law of the beheaded calf, which he was studying when he learned about Joseph's disappearance.⁶⁴ This complex association between wagon and calf is related to the similar sound of

⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 21:1–9 deals with the finding a dead body in the fields when the killer is unknown. The elders of the nearest town have to behead a calf (עֲגֹלָה עֵרֹפָה) a neck-struck calf) at the place where the body was found, and proclaim: "Our hands have not shed this blood." Miraculously Jacob was studying this matter when Joseph's bloody garment was brought to him, and he thought that his hands had not shed this blood; miraculously, too, Joseph knew what his father was studying at the time, and thought that he should send Jacob a sign that he was still alive to prove that the brothers were not playing a trick on him again. The elaborate study of how, where, and when the act of striking the calf should be performed is related in the Mishnah, *Sotah*, 9; and in the Babylonian Talmud, *Sotah*, 44b–49b. Since the students of the Torah during the Middle Ages disregarded the concept of chronological time, Rashi could envisage Jacob studying the law according to a later book of the Pentateuch, the Mishnah, and the Talmud.

both terms in Hebrew: wagon is *agala*, a sound similar to *egla*, which is calf. Rashi explains that Joseph sending *agalot* (the plural of wagon) was meant as a sign to Jacob that he was still alive, by reminding him of what he was studying when he saw Joseph's bloody garment, an allusion to the proclamation: "My hands have not shed this blood" pronounced by the elders over the beheaded calf (Deut. 21:7).

Exodus

The story of Moses in Egypt is illustrated in ten scenes, mostly consecutive. The burning bush that Moses saw on Mount Horeb (Ex. 3:2–3) is depicted in the commentary column on fol. 67v, which is shaped as a twining tree with large leaves surrounded by small flames. On fol. 72v (Fig. 5) is Aaron's rod changing into a serpent and swallowing the rods of Pharaoh's magician (Ex. 7:10–12). The commentary column is shaped as a winged dragon with two legs, long ears, open toothed jaws, and a twisted tail ending below in a small drawn dragon's head about to swallow a short rod in front.

The plague of blood (Ex. 7:20–21) on fol. 73 is illustrated by shaping the commentary column as a meandering river, inscribed "This is the Nile."⁶⁵ Three dead fish are drawn in the bends. The plague of frogs (Ex. 8:1–2) is shown as three leaping frogs drawn at the side of the geometrically shaped commentary column. The plague of lice (Ex. 8:12–13) on fol. 74 is illustrated by a few tiny lice drawn on either side of the commentary column. The plague of beasts (Ex. 8:17–20) on fol. 74v has a drawing of a head blowing a horn protruding from the geometrically shaped commentary column, next to the word "is blowing." This relates to Rashi's commentary explaining how in a similar catastrophe, a war, a besieging army blows horns to frighten the besieged.

The palms of a pair of hands are drawn below the commentary column on fol. 75 and on top of the column on fol. 75v. Both depictions illustrate the verse "Take to you handfuls of ashes," relating to the plague of boils (Ex. 9:8–10). Rashi explains the appearance of two hands, in spite of the fact that an object is usually thrown with one hand, as a miracle with the hands of both Moses and Aaron being joined together

⁶⁵ In Hebrew: זה נילוס.

in calling down this plague.⁶⁶ A pen-and-ink drawing in the left margin of fol. 78 represents the plague of darkness as two people touching each other within a house, illustrating either the verse “Darkness which may be felt” (Ex. 10:21) or “they saw not one another” (Ex. 10:23).

The crossing of the Red Sea has three illustrations. In the left margin next to the commentary column of fol. 78v a little dog is seated, illustrating Ex. 11:7: “But against any of the Children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue.” The head of a horse, referring to the horses of Pharaoh’s army drowning in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:23), is at the bottom of the commentary column on fol. 83. The crossing of the Red Sea is concluded with a pen-and-ink drawing in the right margin on fol. 84v of Miriam playing the timbrel and the flute afterward (Ex. 15:20).

Six episodes are related to the wandering of the Israelites in the desert, including a few laws, beginning with an amphora in the outer margin on fol. 86v, the container into which Moses and Aaron put a sample of the manna “to be kept for your generations” (Ex. 16:33). At the bottom of fol. 87v is a partly cropped catchword depicting two hooded knights fighting, one with a raised sword, illustrating the battle of the Israelites with Amalek (Ex. 17:8–13). On fol. 91 the initial word of the pericope *Mishpatim* (Ex. 21:1), dealing with the “judgments which thou shalt set before them,” is placed inside a double frame, with the hooded head of a bearded man extending a warning hand with a long index finger. In the left margin of fol. 92 a hand holding a sword is placed next to the commentary relating to the punishment of a master who kills his servant (Ex. 21:20), which according to Rashi’s explanation is death by the sword (based on Bab. Talmud, *Sanhedrin*, 71a). Two additional hands with elongated index fingers pointing to each other are drawn above the biblical text. On fol. 103v below the commentary column is a circle surrounded by a garland of fleurs-de-lis, inscribed with the extract quoted from Rashi’s commentary on Ex. 30:3, “A crown of gold round about, a sign of the priestly crown” (which only appears at the top of next page).⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Stating in Hebrew: כל דבר הנזרק בכח אינו נזרק אלא ביד אחת, הרי נסי הרבה, אחד שהחזיק קומצו של משה מלא חפנים שלו ושל אהרן.

⁶⁷ In Hebrew: זר זהב סימן לכתר כהונה. Being a Cohen, Shlomo the scribe probably wished to stress his priestly origin with this sign. This is based on the Babylonian Talmud, *Yoma*, 72b, which explains that out of the three crowns of the Tabernacle, the priest received that of the incense altar.

An exceptional illustration is on fol. 119v (Fig. 3) below the end of the book of Exodus across the entire width of the page. It consists of a diagram of the knotted *ephod* and the twelve stones of the *hoshen*, used by the high priest for divination, giving the right answer to the leaders of the community (described twice in Ex. 28:6–30 and 39:2–21). This was done by means of the *Urim veTumim*, which were also part of the “Hoshen of Judgment.” On top of the commentary column is the title: “This is a different, new commentary,”⁶⁸ and is in fact a shortened version of Rashi’s commentary on Ex. 28:6, with some variations (Rashi’s commentary on Ex. 39:2–21 is not extant). The diagram is drawn according to an interpretation written below it. Unlike the descriptions of the *hoshen* in the Bible (Ex. 28:15–21, 39:2–14), which arrange the stones in four rows,⁶⁹ the diagram arranges all the stones in one long row, adding two additional rows below, all enclosed in knotted frames of the *ephod*. On the top row are the names of the twelve stones, and below them are the corresponding names of the twelve tribes in the order of

⁶⁸ In Hebrew: זאת פרישה אחרת חדשה.

⁶⁹ There are a few depictions of the *ephod* and the *hoshen* in Hebrew illuminated manuscripts. A colored depiction appears in an Ashkenazi-German manuscript with Rashi’s commentary on the Pentateuch, Haftarot, and two Megillot, with additions by his pupil R. Joseph Kara. It was completed on 9.9.1294 (23 Elul 5054 AC). The illustration is on a full page (fol. 41) at the end of Exodus, as in our manuscript, but depicts the *ephod* as two sheets of cloth, connected by metal rings with a roundel between them for the priest’s head. On the front are the twelve stones, arranged in four rows, inscribed with the names of the stones and of the tribes, and at the back are the two stones of the *Urim VeTumim*. A caption on its side states: “The *ephod* was like a *shurkut* without sleeves.” (האפוד היה כמין שורקוט בלא בתי ידים ושמות השבטים כתובים באבנים.) (מלפניו ומאחוריו של כהן גדול.) The odd term *shurkut* is also given as a synonym for the term cape (מקטורן) in a halakhic ruling concerning the tying of laces on the Sabbath by R. Isaac ben Moses of Vienna (c. 1180–1250, see *Or Zaru’a*, II, *Shabat*, 67). I am grateful to Ariella Amar for this reference. The term may suggest an apron in old German, similar to the modern German *Schürze*. I am grateful to Prof. Aliza Cohen for this suggestion. Rashi also refers to an apron in his interpretation of the *ephod*, worn by noble women when riding, and he calls it *pourcient* in old French. This manuscript’s whereabouts are unknown, because of the circumstances of its provenance. Before World War II it belonged to the *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Berlin, and one of their teachers, Dr. Alexander Guttman, took it from Germany to the United States in 1940 together with another fifty-eight manuscripts. He kept the manuscripts for more than forty years in Cincinnati, where he taught at the Hebrew Union College, until he offered them for sale at Sotheby’s in New York. Only after the manuscripts were sold (on June 26, 1984, this manuscript as Lot 57), did the court of New York respond to a public outcry, and order Sotheby’s to retrieve the manuscripts from the buyers and find public institutions to house them, so that they would be available to scholars and the general public. However, not all the manuscripts were returned, this being one. I am grateful to Dr. Cissy Grossman for the information about the sale and its consequences.

their birth and Jacob's blessing his sons (Gen. 49:3–27), which were to be engraved on the stones. In the lower row are the names of the three Patriarchs, divided in sections of one to three letters, followed by the term: "Tribes of Jeshurun." According to the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma*, 73b) the names of the Patriarchs and the term were added in order to have the entire Hebrew alphabet appearing on the twelve stones, since the letters *zadei* and *tet* were missing in the names of the tribes. With these additions the alphabet was complete and enabled to enlighten the necessary letters on the stones of the *hoshen* and make up the correct answer. As our scribe-artist Shlomo explains, he drew them according to the learned commentary by R. Abraham bar Ytzhak, dean of the court of Lunel.⁷⁰

Leviticus

The Sacrifice of Isaac appears above the initial word of Leviticus, on fol. 120 (Fig. 13). The drawing is similar to that on fol. 22v (Fig. 12), though much broader and arranged differently. Isaac with hands and legs bound separately is lying on the structured altar in the centre. The hooded Abraham is holding Isaac's hair with his left hand and a

⁷⁰ He probably refers to Abraham bar Ytzhak of Montpellier (known as *מן ההר* died c. 1315), who functioned in some communities in the south of France and in Provence. He is known for his commentaries on the Talmud, some of which were based on Rashi and composed in that style. His commentary on *Yoma*, which elaborates on the *hoshen*, was published by Bloi (1975), 208–223, from a manuscript that ends on page 63a, and therefore our commentary on page 73b is not included; cf. Urbach (1980), in n. 23 above, 248–249. Thanks are due to Ariella Amar for her help with this reference and in identifying R. Abraham bar Ytzhak. There is another rabbi by the name of Abraham bar Ytzhak of Narbonne (1110–1179), known by his title "Dean of Court," but he was mainly interested in matters of law, and did not write a biblical or Talmudic commentary.

The Hebrew transcription of the words on the *hoshen* is as follows:

אודם, פטדה, ברקת, נפך, ספיר, יהלם, לשם, שבו, אחלמה, תרשיש, שהם, ישפה
ראובן, שמעון, לוי, יהודה, דן, נפתלי, גד, אשר, יששכר, זבלון, יוסף, בנימין
א ב רהם י יצחק י יעקב שב טי י ש ו ר ון
כך היו/ האבנים סדורות לפי מה שאנו אומרים ביומא פ' (רק) בא לו דפריך התם
והיו לו כתיב בהן צדי כיצד לומר עלה והצלח כשהיו שואלים באורים/ ותומים לירד
במלחמה. ומשני אברהם יצחק ויעקב כתיב בהו' (י). ותופריך והא לא כתיב בהו' (י)
ט"ת. ומשני שבטי ישורון כתיב בהו' (י). להכי מפרש/ הגאון נוחו עדן כאשר ציירתי
למעלה. וכן באתה תצוה, ובאלה פקודי כמלואותם. הילכך צריך שיהיו האבנים שוות,
שיהיו ששה/ אותיות בכל אבן ואבן לא פחות ולא יותר, והיינו דכול במלואותם
שהן ממולאין, שהיו בכל אחת ואחת ששה אותיות ולפי זה צריך/ שיהא חסר ו'ו
ראשונה ובספרים מדויקין חסר ו'ו ובעמיו בב' יודין וכן כתוב בספר מדיוק (צריך
להיות: מדויק) מפ' (רוש) הרב ר' אברהם ב"ר יצחק אב בית דין מלונל.

knife in his right. The angel is on the left, and the ram to the right is facing Abraham. On top are traces of an unfinished triple arcade. The Sacrifice of Isaac is used as an opening to Leviticus because the book starts with detailed descriptions of sacrifices. The Sacrifice of Isaac also appears in an initial-word panel for Leviticus in the Ambrosian Bible from southern Germany executed in 1236–1238.⁷¹

The rest of the book of Leviticus is illustrated with four pen-and-ink drawings. On fol. 130 the initial words of the pericope *Shmini* (Lev. 9–11) are written within an arcade, and under them are a pen-drawn calf and ram, relating to the two animals that are to be sacrificed on the eighth day after the dedication of the priests of the Tabernacle (Lev. 9:1–2). On fol. 132v a pen-drawn owl in the margin illustrates the unclean birds that should not be eaten (Lev. 11:13–19). In the left margin, next to the Targum column of fol. 153v, is a head shown blowing a shofar above a partly omitted verse in the text, illustrating the proclamation of liberty in the fiftieth jubilee year by blowing a horn (Lev. 25:8–10). Within the commentary column, below part of a missing verse in the text of fol. 155v, is a clenched fist illustrating the possibility of redeeming a property that a poor man had to sell and now “his hand can reach it” (Lev. 25:25–28).

Numbers

The book of Numbers contains seven illustrations of different laws and episodes. That on fol. 165v shows three coins like medallions on top of geometric forms shaping the commentary column, alluding to the five shekels that each first-born had to pay to the high priest, Aaron, and his sons to be redeemed. According to Num. 3:45–51, the Levites were to replace the firstborn, who until then were the servants of God, in memory of the plague of firstborn (Exodus, 13:11–15). The replacement was done by one Levite redeeming one firstborn. After counting the Levites and the firstborn it showed that there were 273 more firstborn, which had to be redeemed with five shekels.

In the right margin of fol. 170v is a tiny cauldron with a handle over a tripod, pen-drawn near the word “pot,” which relates to the sacrifice of a nazirite when the days of his separation end (Num. 6:13–21). As part of the ceremony, his head is shaved and the hair put on the altar fire under the cooked shoulder of the ram (Num. 6:18). According to

⁷¹ See n. 30 above.

Rashi's commentary, the ram is cooked in a cauldron. However, our scribe added to the commentary his own or someone else's interpretation: "under the cauldron, namely a pot."⁷²

On fol. 181v (Fig. 11) the text tells the story of the return of the twelve spies sent by Moses to search out the land of Canaan (Num. 13). Rashi's commentary on Num. 13:23 determine the tasks of each spy: eight of them carried the staff with the cluster of grapes, two others carried pomegranates and figs, but Caleb and Joshua did not carry anything. His commentary, based on one of the interpretations of a midrash (Bab. Talmud, *Sota*, 34a) did not elaborate on the different possibilities for eight people to carry the cluster instead of two as in the Bible. Our knowledgeable scribe added within the commentary column an explanation, based on an elaboration probably from a tosaphist's commentary on the Talmud, although the scribe attributes it to Rashi.⁷³ The additional commentary with the accompanying diagram in the right margin explains that the staff with the cluster was resting on two other long rods, one on either side, and four other smaller rods were placed at the ends of the long rods, so that eight men could carry the cluster each at one end of the small rods.⁷⁴ The pen-drawn diagram has three bunches of grapes hanging from the staff and three pomegranates and two leaves fastened on top of the main staff. Next to the smaller rods are inscribed the names of six of the tribes (the other two on the right were cropped by a later binder). From right to left and top to bottom, they are: Simeon, Naphtali, Issachar, Judah (in spite of the commentary that says that Caleb, the chief of the tribe of Judah did not carry the staff), Zebulun, and Dan. Between the text and the commentary columns is a branch with three figs and two bunches of grapes.

⁷² In Hebrew: תחת הדוד לשון סיר.

⁷³ It could be a variant of Rashi, but if so, he did not have to start the additional text with: "So interpreted," and end it after fifteen lines with: "this is how Rashi interpreted it" (וכן (הוי פירש רש"י בזה).

⁷⁴ The tosaphist's addition may have been by R. Judah ben Eliezer of Troyes, since in his Pentateuch commentary called *Minhat Yehudah* of 1313 he added a few diagrams, one similar to ours, explaining the need for large and small rods for eight people to carry the cluster. The diagrams appear in some of the more than thirty manuscript copies of his commentary; see Twito (2005). He includes photos of two fourteenth-century manuscripts with diagrams: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, héb. 168; and New York, Jewish Theological Seminary Library, Ms. Lutzki 787; cf. Diagrams of the different systems of carrying it by eight in Steinzaltz (1990), Babylonian Talmud, *Sota*, 148. Thanks are due to Ariella Amar for both references with the comparative diagrams; cf. Madrid, Duke of Alba Collection, Bible, fol. 118v, see Nordström (1967), 108–112.

On fol. 190 at the bottom of the Targum column are four pen-drawn ears of corn, relating to the offering of tithes to the priests as “corn from the threshing floor” (Num. 18:27). On fol. 194v at the bottom of the commentary column is the head of a grazing ox, showing the fear of the Moabites that the Israelites will “lick up all that is around us, as the ox licketh the grass in the field” (Num. 22:4). It is also related to Rashi’s interpretation (based on the Midrash Numbers *Rabbah*, *Balak*, 4), written next to the ox’s head, that “whatever an ox licks has no sign of blessing.”

On fol. 203 Rashi’s commentary on Num. 27:16 relates to Joshua as Moses’ successor who never left his master: “As Solomon said, whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof” (Prov. 27:18). A marginal drawing next to the name Solomon (which is also the name of the scribe) is a hand holding an uprooted fig tree with fruit and leaves, inscribed “This is a fig tree.” Above the tree within a leaf is written the part missing from the commentary: “Solomon whoso keepeth the fig tree.”⁷⁵

Deuteronomy

While the space round the initial word of the book of Deuteronomy is empty, in the book itself there are six illustrated allusions to the text. On fol. 216 (Fig. 2) Rashi’s commentary on Deut. 1:3 explains that Moses remonstrated with Israel as he neared his death, as did other leaders including Jacob, Joshua, and Samuel, and David to Solomon. Near the name Solomon in the commentary is a hand holding a six-pointed star enclosed within a circle, inscribed “The seal of King Solomon.”⁷⁶ Since Solomon is also the scribe’s name, the seal also alludes to his seal.

On fol. 228 God suggests that the Israelites should not conquer the inhabitants of Canaan immediately, but gradually, “lest beasts of the field increase upon thee” (Deut. 7:22). This is illustrated by a stag ensnared in a rope, near a tree drawn next to the commentary column. Rashi adds that “If you will not sin, the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee” (based on Job 5:23). On fol. 235v the scribe’s name Shlomo is marked by a leaf surrounded by an eagle in profile, its long foliate tail extending between the columns. The name appears in the commentary, related to what King Solomon said in Proverbs 7:9, mentioning evil

⁷⁵ In Hebrew: שלמה שומר תאנה.

⁷⁶ In Hebrew: חותם של שלמה המלך.

deeds done secretly in the darkness of night. This verse is mentioned in Rashi's commentary regarding the secret enticement to worship other gods (Deut. 13:6).

In the margin of fol. 240v is a drawing of a man's torso, his extended arm holding a spear, alluding to the story of Phinehas, who "took a spear in his hand" to strike the Israelite man and the Moabite woman during their intercourse (Num. 25:7). The depiction of Phinehas relates to Rashi's commentary that tries to determine what constitutes the arm of a sacrificed lamb or goat given to the priest (Deut. 18:3). One of the possibilities is that it is the part between the elbow and the palm; another suggests that arm is synonymous with palm, as with Phinehas holding a spear in his hand. Our scribe-artist used this allusion to depict Phinehas, but not to illustrate the text where the story appears (Num. 25:7).

On fol. 252v at the bottom of the commentary column are the winged talons of an eagle inscribed "as it will fly,"⁷⁷ referring to an enemy who will fly as swiftly as an eagle against the Israelites who do not worship God (Deut. 28:49). This text appears on fol. 253v, where there is a drawing of a large heraldic spread eagle, related to the text (Deut. 28:48), and inscribed: "(a yoke of) iron upon (your neck)."⁷⁸ Two similar wings over two eagle's claws appear in the above-mentioned early fourteenth-century Franco-German Pentateuch copied by Hayyim d'Quopdana, illustrating the Haphtarah of Shabbat and the New Moon (in Isaiah 66:20), dealing with bringing all nations to Jerusalem to worship God, and traveling in many different ways, though, in spite of the illustration, not on eagle's wings.⁷⁹

The Five Megillot

Only three of the five Megillot have decorated initial-word panels; and in the books of Ruth and Ecclesiastes the space round the initial word remains empty. This section starts with the book of Esther on fol. 263 and Song of Songs on fol. 270v. In both, the entire panel, including the initial words, is only outlined, which may indicate that they were prepared for colouring. All three panels may have been copied by our scribe-artist

⁷⁷ In Hebrew: באשר ידאה.

⁷⁸ In Hebrew: ברזל על.

⁷⁹ London, British Library, Or. ms. 2696, fol. 616v.

from another manuscript, since the bands round the initial word have traces of pinpricks, and some of the hybrids, animals, and humans are outlined by stylus. They all echo the mixture of similar animals, hybrids, grotesque motifs, and interlacing bands that was common in Hebrew illuminated manuscripts from the south of Germany.

The panel for the book of Esther on fol. 263 has an interwoven arcade at the top framing four lions' heads, from whose mouths extend interwoven bands. They all end in the mouths of five other lions' heads, which form the bases of the arcade. In the center between the two initial words is a pillar decorated with interlaced bands, forming at the bottom of the panel the tails of two addorsed winged dragons, whose long necks form the sides of the lower part of the panel. Two facing birds are entwined in the dragons' tails in the center.

The panel of the Song of Songs on fol. 270v (Fig. 18) is composed of three interwoven bands in the form of a figure eight, creating a rosette. Between the bands at the top is a grotesque soldier aiming a spear at a human-headed hybrid dragon raising a sword. At the bottom of the panel, in the corners, two musicians are sitting cross-legged, one playing the viol and the other the lute, while in front of them a monkey and a dog are dancing on their hind legs; single leaves are drawn in the smaller compartments. On fol. 273v at the end of the book, below the second column, which mentions a deer (Song 8:14), there is a crouching stag with a leaf in its mouth.

The panel for the book of Ruth on fol. 274 was not completed, but through the plummet tracings it is possible to detect an agricultural scene: two people threshing, a man winnowing, and a woman (Ruth?) gathering corn into her bag. Apart from Ruth gleaning, the scene is not a direct illustration of the text.⁸⁰ Over the plummet drawings the two initial words are repeated in seventeenth-century display script.

The initial word of Lamentations on fol. 277 is outlined within a black painted panel. Within the commentary column a crying human face is drawn with a hood falling over its eyes, facing an open-mouthed lion's head incorporating the small initial word. A man covered by a *talit* is

⁸⁰ The story of Ruth is depicted as a fifteenth-century addition to the so-called Worms Mahzor of 1272 (Jerusalem, the Jewish National and University Library, Ms. Heb. Quarto 781/1, fol. 221), but there the scenes are different, apart from Ruth gathering corn; see Cohen-Mushlin (1985), 94–95.

drawn on the side of the initial word of Lamentations in the De Castro Pentateuch of 1344, fol. 349.⁸¹

Conclusion

Shlomo the scribe-artist of our Pentateuch can be considered one of the more impressive illustrators of Hebrew manuscripts in the Ashkenazi world during the fourteenth century. The two types of illustrations he used—*carmina figurata* and the pen-and-ink drawings—which allude not only to the biblical text but to Rashi's commentary as well, are known from other manuscripts of the same school, although most of them lack the imagination displayed by Shlomo and the allusions to the text. The same types of illustrations are also known from earlier Franco-German Hebrew illuminations from northern France and from Franconia in southwest Germany, where some of the iconographical models for our Pentateuch originated. However, their *carmina figurata* shapes are not as common as in our Albenc manuscript, and the drawings in the Franco-German manuscripts are usually outlined in micrography. Shlomo's imagination and innovations are endless and can scarcely be paralleled in other manuscripts from the period in the south of France.

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⁸¹ See n. 29 above.

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THE HIDDEN COUPLE
AN UNEXECUTED UNDERDRAWING IN THE CATALAN
MICROGRAPHY MAHZOR*

Dalia-Ruth Halperin

The Catalan Micrography Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Hebr. 8°6527) was written and decorated in Catalonia in the fourteenth century.¹ Its decoration was executed entirely in micrography—minute script forming the outline of an image—and consists of twenty-three full-page panels concentrated in two quires at the beginning of the manuscript and thirty-four candelabra tree decorations in the outer margins of the text. In all but four cases the candelabra tree design appears on confronting pages, and on several pages the trees are inhabited by birds. Various other types of decorations include a geometric scroll, which serves as a text divider, and an animal design in the outer margins. Apart from the micrographic decoration, there are two initial words in gold within decorated panels (Fig. 1). Throughout the volume, both the main text and the micrography are in semicursive Sephardi script. Paleographic

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¹ The Catalan Micrography Mahzor was dated based on the life span of the authors of the *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) to ca. 1280 in Weiser (1992), 60–67. The Index of Jewish Art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem dates the manuscript to mid-fourteenth century, see Aleph Card 0006479 and 0006489. Bezalel Narkiss dates it to the end of the century; see Narkiss (1998), 74. Over the years the late Leila Avrin dated the Catalan Micrography Mahzor to three different dates, all in the fourteenth century. In Avrin (1991), 139, the manuscript was dated to the second quarter of the fourteenth century; in “The Micrography of the Catalan Mahzor and its Symbolism,” *Wolfenbütteler Forschungen*, Jeremy Adler and Ulrich Ernst (eds.) (not published) to the third quarter; and in the microfilm B167 at the Department of Manuscripts and Archives at the Jewish National and University Library to the end of the century. I am grateful to Leila Avrin’s daughter Lisi Shirbi for allowing me access to her late mother’s papers. The Leila Avrin archives are held today at the Isidore and Anne Falk Information Center for Judaica and Jewish Ethnography at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. Dodi (1992–93), 1075, based the dating of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor in his article on the microfilm’s date.

assessment² reveals that the scribe was also the masorator.³ A comparison of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor with dated manuscripts in the same script suggests a date between 1325 and 1354.⁴

A thorough examination of the underdrawings beneath the micrographic designs shows a barely discernible complete image under the scroll design in the center of the framed panel on fol. 9v (Fig. 2), which can be verified by infrared photography (Fig. 3).⁵ For some reason this composition was never carried out. The present study offers a discussion and interpretation of this image not only in the context of the rest of the decoration program, but also against the background of late Medieval Sephardi culture and Jewish-Christian polemics.

The underdrawing shows two standing figures facing one another. The one on the left is a man in profile facing toward the right with his legs *en face*. His bent arms are raised in prayer. He has short hair with big curls and bangs. He is beardless and has a broad nose; his eyelid is open at the side, the eyebrow is a tall arch, and his lips and chin protrude. He is wearing a surcoat⁶ with a broad opening at the elbow, which reaches down to midcalf, but is shorter than the *cote* that peeks out from beneath it. The *cote*, which is a tunic with long tight-fitting sleeves, has a round collar and appears to be striped or pleated.⁷ There is a diagonal line descending from the left hip toward the right thigh, which may be a low-fitting belt. He is wearing shoes with slightly pointed tips.

² Different from Bible manuscripts, where the main text is written in square script, the use of semicursive script in both text types of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor makes a comparison feasible. The morphologic difference between square and semicursive scripts in Bible codices makes a paleographic comparison difficult if not impossible.

³ Micrographic decoration formed from *masorah magna* usually decorates the lower and upper margins of the page in Bible manuscripts. The scribe who applies these lists is the “masorator,” so I think it is appropriate to refer to the micrographic decorator of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor as the “masorator,” even though the text consists of citations from the Book of Psalms and not the *masorah*.

⁴ For consideration of the paleographic and codicological findings, see the first chapter of my dissertation, Halperin (in prep.) An analysis of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor’s text further supports a date of ca. 1350 and enables us to attribute it to Barcelona.

⁵ My thanks to Rafael Weiser and Rivka Plesser, former directors of the Department of Manuscripts and Archives, and to Tova Szeintoch and Ilana Kessler of the Hebrew University Laboratory for Restoration and Preservation of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, who agreed to take the manuscript for infrared imaging at the Israel Museum. The imaging was carried out by Michael Maggen, head of the Israel Museum’s Paper Conservation Laboratory. Since the parchment is not flat, the page had to be processed in two segments. The two images were merged via Photoshop.

⁶ For this type of coat, see Pignonier and Mane (1997), 167.

⁷ Ibid., 40, 165.

The figure on the right is a woman standing in three-quarter profile facing the man. Her posture has a slight “S” curvature and a braid falls down her back. Her face is drawn in a style similar to that of the man with a broad nose, her eyelid open at the side, and the eyebrow shown as tall arch. Her mouth is wide and straight. She, too, wears a long *cote* with a round collar and tight-fitting sleeves, which clings to her upper torso and opens up with many folds below her waist. There is a bulge above her right hip, which may be the end of the lacing that fits the *cote* tightly to her upper torso or, perhaps, a purse. Shoes peek out from under her dress. Her right hand is raised, but her palm points downward, giving the joint an odd appearance, as if it was fractured. She clutches three floral stems with cloverlike flowers at their tips. Her left palm supports another stem and she has a bouquet binder or the flowering branch’s stalk between her palms, reminiscent of a fleur-de-lys. The man’s face and his uplifted hands are directly opposite the flowering branch in the woman’s hands.

The two figures are within the visible frame executed in micrography. In the center, between them, one can see the remnant of a leafy tree. The style of the leaves and the structure of the branch correspond to those of the seven other trees that appear in the full-page decorations. This motif is typically found in the center of several of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor compositions (Fig. 4, left) and serves as a natural backdrop for the scene. Near the couple’s feet, in the corners at the bottom of the frame, we can discern two birds with spread wings. Each has a round head with a short, sharp beak, a rounded abdomen, and a rectangular tail, and they both face outward. These birds are similar in style to those that inhabit several of the candelabra trees elsewhere in the volume and in one of the initial word panels. The bird at the top of the micrographic scroll on fol. 15v (see Fig. 1, right) is nearly identical to those in the subject underdrawing.⁸

The observation that many elements of the unexecuted drawing correspond formally to counterparts on other pages strongly suggests that this couple was designed by the same individual who laid out the compositions for the micrographic decoration. The correspondence is found in the appearance of the tree, the types of leaves, the drawing’s

⁸ There is no reason to assume that the birds are not part of the original design. Their stylistic similarity with the birds in the candelabra trees—which are integral elements of the micrographic design—show that the decorations were laid out by the scribe-masorator.

position on the page, and the style of the birds. The couple is placed in identical relationship to the frame as the design within in the other twenty-two full-page panels and is of exactly the same height and width as the scroll that is now seen in the center of the composition. As on all the folios of the second quire, the drawing area on this folio is 118×89 mm. The *aiguisé* frame on this page belongs to the repertoire of frames evident throughout the manuscript. Moreover, nothing indicates that this folio was in secondary use, its parchment being of the same color and thickness as the other folios in the quire; in terms of its technical features, the preparation process and its ruling indicate that the parchment corresponds fully to the other pages of the manuscript.⁹

These observations suggest that fol. 9v originally contained a complete underdrawing, which, for some reason, was rejected at the last moment by either the scribe or the patron. Instead of the composition with the couple, the scroll design of fol. 9r shining through the parchment was copied. The decision to hastily reproduce the decoration of the recto page indicates that the scribe was determined to avoid a delay in the completion of his work. A further reason to reuse the scroll design may have been the fact that it hides most of the essential details that reveal the existence of the couple—facial features, hands, most of the clothing—and the birds.

Elsewhere I argue that the discovery of this drawing constitutes a Rosetta stone for stylistic comparison.¹⁰ The fact that the linear quality of the drawing is not affected by the micrographic design makes a stylistic analysis easier than for the other pages. It can be demonstrated that this drawing and, by extension, the rest of the figurative designs, such as the falconer on the facing page (see Fig. 2, left), can be attributed

⁹ The ruling method employed by the scribe is typical of Sephardi Hebrew manuscripts until the middle of the fourteenth century. Two folios were ruled together on the hair side at the same time, the ruling being done after the quire arrangement was laid out. This method was used only rarely after 1350; see Beit-Arié (1981), 75–76. This observation supports the dating of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor to the period between 1325 and 1354, but its importance is that it enables us to reconstruct the scribe's working procedures. An analogy between the ruling method and the spread of the illuminations indicates that the scribe first fixed the quire arrangement, and then engraved the outlines of the frames; the actual decoration was added only at this point. This can be supported by the observation of punch holes used to draft the head of the falconer's horse on fol. 10r. These holes are evident up to fol. 14r, the last page of the second decorated quire.

¹⁰ Halperin (2007), 19–30.

to the workshop of Ferrer and Arnau Bassa in Barcelona.¹¹ Numerous comparisons can be drawn between the figurative images in the Catalan Micrography Mahzor and those of a group of manuscripts produced in the Bassa workshop between 1333 and 1348.¹² In particular, a relationship can be established with the Anglo-Catalan Psalter in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. lat. 8846),¹³ and the *Book of Hours of Marie of Navarre* in Venice (Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cod. Marc. Lat. I, 104 (= 12640)).¹⁴

There is a weight of evidence that illuminations in Hebrew manuscripts were commissioned in the Bassa atelier. This was first shown by Francis Wormald for the Copenhagen copy of Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*.¹⁵ It was further elaborated in more recent years by Rosa Alcoy i Predrós, who pointed to the similarities between the marginal decorations in the *Book of Hours of Marie of Navarre* and the Copenhagen Maimonides.¹⁶ Gabrielle Sed-Rajna linked a Hebrew medical treatise now in Paris (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. hébr. 1203) to the Ferrer Bassa workshop.¹⁷ I do not propose that either Ferrer or Arnau Bassa actually executed any of the full-page illuminations of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor in part or in full. The stylistic similarities between the marginal decorations in manuscripts from their atelier and many of the decorations in the Catalan Micrography Mahzor point to a Jewish scribe-masorator-artist who may have been affiliated with the atelier and entrusted with the execution of marginal decorations. Sed-Rajna suggested that it was possible that a Jewish artist from the Bassa workshop illuminated the Paris Hebrew medical treatise.¹⁸ The overall character of the decorations in the Catalan Micrography Mahzor suggests that its designer was deeply rooted in the repertoire of motifs

¹¹ For the iconographic and stylistic analysis, see the second chapter in Halperin (in prep.).

¹² The Bassa atelier can be traced in various dated works of art, as well as written documents, mostly working contracts with patrons. For detailed information, see Meiss (1941), 45–87; Wormald (1988), 147–52; Dalmases and Jose i Pitarch (1984), 154–160; Yarza Luaces, J. (2005), 299–305; Alcoy, R. (2006), 57–120.

¹³ Leroquais (1940–41), t. II, 78–91; Wormald (1998) 147–149; Avril, Aniel, Mentré, Saulnier, Zaluska (1982), 93–95.

¹⁴ Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, cod. Marc. Lat. I, 104 (= 12640), fol. 186r; Ibid.; Dalmas and Jose i Pitarch (1984), 155–156.

¹⁵ Wormald (1998), Ibid.

¹⁶ Alcoy i Predrós, (1992), 133, 137–139.

¹⁷ Sed-Rajna, (1992), 123, 128.

¹⁸ Ibid. 127.

of Spanish Jewish art with its Islamic influences and sources.¹⁹ Apart from this typically Jewish repertoire, he was also familiar with the iconography, style, and motifs of Western Christian art, and this was a dominant feature in his work.

In the following, I examine the iconographic context of the planned image, which, it appears, must have been charged with controversial meaning of some kind, so that a quick mirror copy of the decoration on the recto of the page was substituted. I argue that the image was borrowed from Christian iconography and planned for adaptation to a Jewish context, but that for some reason it was found to be unsuitable.

It is most likely that the composition in question represented a wedding scene, which could suggest that it was based on the Christian motif of the celestial wedding of Jesus and Maria-Ecclesia. In Ashkenazi manuscript illumination this theme was occasionally employed and transformed into an image of the wedding of the Shekhinah (the in-dwelling of Divine Presence)²⁰ and the Nation of Israel. It appears in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Ashkenazi mahzorim as an illustration of the liturgical poem “With Me from Lebanon My Bride” (Fig. 5).²¹ This transformation of the Christian wedding theme into a Jewish depiction of the Shekhinah to be wedded to Israel has polemic implications in the context of the discussion about the continuation of the Covenant between God and the People of Israel versus the Christian claim that the Covenant was passed on to Christianity.

A brief glimpse at Ashkenazi renderings of “With Me from Lebanon My Bride” suggests that the Catalan Micrography Mahzor version of the motif was slightly modified. Ashkenazi versions of the couple do not picture a flowering branch in the woman’s hand. Following a line

¹⁹ Examples of this repertoire are the pages with the Sanctuary/Temple implements, fol. 11v–12 and the carpet page with a foliate scroll, fol. 3, 4v, 9r, 9v; see Narkiss (1998), 74–75; Sed-Rajna (1975), 6–21; Revel-Neher (1998), 64–83, 91–95, 115–118. Islamic sources are evident not only in additional carpet pages in the Catalan Micrography Mahzor, but also in elements borrowed from the Islamic “animal cycle” that includes the griffin, rabbit, deer/stag, pigeon, dog hunting rabbit, eagle hunting rabbit or stag, and the mounted falconer. See Gelfer-Jørgensen (1986), 113, 118, 124, 129–131, 167–168; Werkmeister (1997), 103.

²⁰ The Shekhinah is the manifest glory of God and is also known as *Malkhut* (Kingdom). It is the tenth *sefirah* (enumeration) in theosophical Kabbalah. The Kabbalah gained prominence in Sephardi culture in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; see Scholem (1982), vol. 1, 230, 245–256.

²¹ For a discussion on the representation of the mystical marriage of Jesus and Maria-Ecclesia motif, see Shalev-Eyni (2005), 27–57; Sed-Rayna (1983), 46–47.

of thought developed by Elisheva Revel-Neher, we can assume that this modification may have resulted from the significance of the flowering staff as a substitute for the lulav (palm branch) as the eschatological emblem in the design of the pages devoted to the Sanctuary/Temple implements in Sephardi Bibles.²² The flowering staff that is to return in the hands of the Messiah signifies that the true priesthood was not passed onto Christianity, but remained within Judaism. Ecclesia is usually depicted in Christian art holding a spear or a chalice, but there are a few renderings in which she holds a trifoliate flowering branch, which, as Ra'aya Heller argues, symbolizes the Trinity and salvation.²³ The branch in the woman's hands adds to the debate. Not only is the closing of the trifoliate flower to one bud a rejection of the Trinity, which stresses the unity of God, but it also signifies that salvation is expected to come with the Jewish Messiah and that the true partner of God is *Synagoga*.²⁴

Could an Ashkenazi motif of visual polemic have had an impact in Spain? The Ashkenazi influence on Sephardi scholarship from the thirteenth century on is a well-known phenomenon. Antirationalistic tendencies among Sephardi scholars had led to an increased interest in midrashic thought and post-Rashi Ashkenazi scholarship, with its highly esteemed traditional study of the Talmud.²⁵ More Catalan scholars studied in French yeshivot,²⁶ and this influence was further enhanced by the immigration of Ashkenazi scholars to Spain and the arrival of French Jews after the expulsion from the Capetian dominions in 1306.²⁷ These developments could well have resulted in a transmission of Ashkenazi iconographic motifs to a Catalan scribe.

There were other channels of cultural interaction as well. Frequent exchange of letters between Sephardi and Ashkenazi scholars was conducted via envoys, mostly merchants, who not only carried written correspondence, but transmitted traditions and customs orally as well.

²² Revel-Neher (1998), 115–118.

²³ Heller (1990), 78, fig. 13.III.

²⁴ Ben-Shalom (2003), 29 n. 31, 42; Lasker (1977), 45–82, 103–104. Polemics on the subject of transubstantiation did not appear in Spain until the end of the fourteenth century; see *ibid.*, 139. For examples of original polemical literature that deals with the Trinity, see also Tautner-Kormann (1993), 70–72, 82–83.

²⁵ Gross (1973), 27–55; Grossman (1992), 227–228.

²⁶ Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry* (1997), 301.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 301–303, 309.

Some of the envoys were scholars themselves, interested in the cultural activities in the communities they reached.²⁸

Elisheva Revel-Neher has shown that, owing to such cultural exchanges, the Sephardi motif of Temple/Sanctuary implements, especially depictions of the menorah, common in Sephardi Bibles reached southern Germany during this period.²⁹ It is plausible to assume that the transmission of iconographic motifs did not occur in only one direction.

All this considered, the pictorial source from the Ashkenazi mahzorim does not carry such a manifold polemic. The motif of the woman with a flowering branch can be found in a bilingual (French and Latin) manuscript of the *Somme-le-Roy* (*The Book of Vices and Virtues*) in the British Library (London, British Library, Add. 28162), dated to 1290–1300 and illuminated either in Paris or in Moubuisson.³⁰ This is a literary and visual source that was known in the Spanish-Provencal region and its complex iconography could have drawn a manifold polemic response.

The text of the *Somme-le-Roy* was authored by the Dominican friar Lorens d'Orléans in 1279. Its survival in numerous copies and translation into six languages—Provencal, Catalan, Spanish, Italian, Flemish, and English—during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries testifies to the fact that it was widely known and popular. Its popularity was probably due to it being a vernacular rendition of a pious text and part of the church's requirement for lay education.³¹ It is reasonable to assume that Jewish scholars may have familiarized themselves with this text in the French, Provencal, or even the Italian version.³² In the same way that the Mendicants studied Hebrew and rabbinic literature to help them in their polemics against Judaism³³ and in support of their extensive efforts

²⁸ Ben-Shalom (1996), 177–179, 189–191; Grabois (1996), 93–94.

²⁹ Revel-Neher (1998), 88.

³⁰ A cycle of fifteen illuminations was already present in the original treatise of the *Somme-le-Roy* and appears in full or partial form in most manuscripts. Alexander (1992), 115–120; Kosmer (1973), 20. Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. fr. 938, fol. 74r is iconographically related to London, British Library, Add. 28162; *ibid.*, 27.

³¹ Nelson (1942), XIII, XXVII–XXIX; Kosmer, (1973), 14, 16–20.

³² On the multilingual talents of the Jews, see Menache (1996), 41–42. The Catalan and Spanish versions are from the fifteenth century. Kosmer (1973), 286d Chart E.

³³ Cohen (1982), 76, 131–56, 242–243; Assis, *The Golden Age of Aragonese Jewry* (1997), 49.

to pressure the Jews to convert, Jewish scholars may have studied texts of the Mendicants in order to counter their arguments.³⁴

On fol. 5v (Fig. 6) there is a full-page illumination divided into four compartments. The upper-left panel shows the figure of a woman standing over a resting stag, personifying Humility. She holds a flowering lily in her right hand, and in her left is a medallion showing the upper torso of a woman with a palm branch and a book. The palm branch, frequently an emblem of martyrdom in Christian art, is also an attribute of Chastity in medieval art. As the book and the stag are two of the attributes of Prudence, I suggest that in this illumination the female figure is a synthesis image of Humility, Prudence, and Chastity.³⁵ The top-right section depicts Pride, personified by King Ahaziah falling from a crenellated wall. The bottom left shows the repentant sinner kneeling before an altar with his hands held in prayer, being welcomed by Jesus, and on the right is the Hypocrite being rejected by Jesus, who turns away.³⁶

³⁴ Daniel Lasker contends that knowledge of Christian doctrine was not attained through reading Christian treatises but through familiarity with these subjects via the debates. David Berger adds that at times Jews read these books in their neighbors' homes. Katrin Kogman-Appel argues the Barcelonan municipal council ban on Jewish trade in Christian holy books in 1326, especially those with symbols and images, points to a possible source of Jewish familiarity with Christian iconography. Owing to the multilingual abilities of the Jews, there is no reason to assume that they did not read such books while they had them in their possession. See Lasker (1977), 162; Berger (1986), 589; Kogman-Appel (2006), 125; Assis, *Jewish Economy in the Medieval Crown of Aragon* (1997), 85.

³⁵ Hall (1974), 'Palm', 231–232; 'Stag', 289. The figure of Humility is combined with Chastity's attribute, the unicorn, in another *Somme-le-Roy* manuscript in the British Museum MS. Add 54180, fol. 97v. Both *Somme-le-Roy* manuscripts are from the thirteenth century, but from different ateliers. Though Chastity's attributes differ, this may indicate that the overall meaning was similar though manifested via different models. The taper in Humility's hand in MS. Add 54180 is an attribute that with the unicorn may identify her with the Virgin. In three other *Somme-le-Roy* manuscripts Humility is crowned and bears a palm branch. This too may indicate that this virtue was identified with the Virgin and represents Maria-Ecclesia. The manuscripts are: Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, cod. fr. 938, fol. 74r; Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, cod. fr. 970, fol. 89v; Cambridge, St. John College, ms. B.9 fol. 198r. In Reims, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 571, fol. 40r, Humility is not crowned but she holds a leafy trifoliate-leaf branch.

³⁶ The iconography of the virtues and vices originated in fifth-century Prudentius's *Psychomachia*, *Battle of the Souls*. The poem recounts the battle between the virtues and the vices as an account of the conflict of the Christian faith and the idolaters, its victory heralded by a thousand martyrs. The opposing pairs of virtues and vices described in the *Psychomachia* became disengaged in the thirteenth century, and they became more symbolic, no longer following the original combative scheme presented by Prudentius. See Murray (1996), 561–562; Mâle (1982), 73; Kosmer (1973) 88–91.

The visual similarities between the image of the couple in the Catalan Micrography Mahzor and the left side of the illumination in the *Somme-le-Roy*—Humility and the sinner—suggest that Jewish scholars were familiar with this sort of literature. Moreover, I argue that the employment of the motif of the woman and the sinner constitutes an iconographical transformation in support of a polemical response to the whole *Somme-le-Roy* miniature. Humility is the root virtue from which all other virtues grew. It can therefore incorporate their attributes, the Holy Ghost's gifts, and the beatitudes of all the other virtues.³⁷ Via Prudence man is able to pursue the right line of reason so that all his thoughts and deeds are within the ordinance of God, and he may attain and see His kingdom. Via Temperance-Chastity, he is without undoing and never needs to repent. The first gift of the Holy Ghost—dread combined with meekness—is part of Humility. This is the virtue that is the foundation of the spiritual edifice and necessary for salvation.³⁸ Therefore the composite virtue of Humility represents the foundation of the spiritual edifice necessary for salvation, which is the gate through which a person willingly submits himself to God, becomes sanctified by Him, and connects with Jesus and his teachings.³⁹

In Judaism the Shekhinah is the most fundamental of the *sefirot* (enumerations) in the Kabbalah and constitutes the gate to preeminence, conveying through her essence the other dimensions of the Almighty to this world. The aspiration of the believer is to attain that singleness that will enable him to transfer the abundance of heavenly wealth to the earthly world and deliver his soul into the domain of godliness.⁴⁰ The scribe-masorator-artist of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor responds in a way that is diametrically opposed to the Christian theological view and claims that the only truth is found in the Torah, which is sustained and illuminated by the light of the Shekhinah shining from its depths. The repentant Congregation of Israel, whose atonement will hasten

³⁷ Kosmer (1973), 52a Chart A, 94.

³⁸ Nelson (1942), 123, lines 1–20; 124, lines 32–35; 125, lines 1–4, 11–21, 25–28; 126, lines 3–7; 128, lines 26–29; 130 lines 1–2, 14–29; 140, lines 5–6. See also Kosmer (1973), 93–94; *Catholic Encyclopaedia on CD-Rom*, entries: Eight Beatitudes; Holy Ghost section VI. Gifts of: Humility, Prudence, Temperance.

³⁹ As shown by Ellen V. Kosmer, there is little correspondence between picture and text in the illuminated *Somme-le-Roy*. The miniature amplifies the treatise with visual examples in addition to the verbal ones. See Kosmer (1973), 28.

⁴⁰ Tishby (1971), vol. 1 *Sefirah*, 133–35, *Shekhinah*, 219–22, 226–28; vol. 2. *Torah*, 375.

the redemption, is sanctified in the Shekhinah and it is through the Shekhinah that the Nation becomes unified with its God, the Unity and not the Trinity. As the Hypocrite ailed with Pride was viewed as the Jew,⁴¹ the Catalan Micrography Mahzor's scribe in fact completely turns over the *Somme-le-Roy* miniature and declares that the Nation of Israel is still *Verus Israel*.

This line of thought brings us back to the falconer opposite the couple, who, to my way of thinking, also carries a polemic response. One of the concepts represented by the falconer in the secular literature of this period is the wise and righteous worldly ruler who brings peace.⁴² The texts employed to form the micrography image⁴³ are psalms concerned with the continuation of the Diaspora, maintaining the Covenant between the Almighty and the Nation of Israel, repentance that will hasten salvation, and salvation itself with the Almighty Himself as the Savior. The verses forming the drawing of the falconer and the head of his horse are from psalms interpreted in the rabbinic commentary of Midrash Tehillim as expressions of the Savior.⁴⁴

In the same vein as the transformation of Jesus and Maria-Ecclesia in "With Me from Lebanon My Bride" to the Shekhinah and the Nation of Israel—and not to the Almighty and the Congregation of Israel—we

⁴¹ In the British Library *Somme-le-Roy* (London, British Library, Add. 54180), fol. 97v, the Hypocrite dons a Jewish conical cap. As Ellen V. Kosmer (which one is correct?) demonstrates, this comparison is known in the Middle Ages and is due to Matthew VI:5, where Christ says "thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue," and in Matthew 23, where he denounces the Pharisees as hypocrites. See Kosmer (1973), 95–98, 156.

⁴² Friedman (1978), 196. For literature on hunting scenes in Medieval art, see van Marle (1931–32), vol. 1, 197ff.

⁴³ The falconer and the horse's head are constructed from Psalm 59; the tree and the rest of the horse from Psalms 77 and 78; the outer frames from Psalms 23 and 24; and the inner frames from Psalm 104 verses 14–end, excluding verses 22–23, 29, 33 and Psalms 29 and 31. I wish to thank Haviva Pedaya from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, who emphasized that the scribe's selection of specific psalms for each illumination is an editing task laden with meaning. The illuminations point to the use of symbols from the Zohar. The examination of the possible holistic typological-historic message underlying the cycle of full-page illuminations is one of the key features of my doctoral dissertation.

⁴⁴ *Midrash Tehillim*, see Psalm 59(5), 77(2), 78(18), 23(7), 29(1,2); for an English version, see Braude (1959). This midrashic compilation includes homilies from the third to thirteenth centuries. Rabbi David Kimkhi (Radak, 1160–1235) interprets the subject of Psalm 59 and verse 31 from Psalm 104 as the messianic king. See *Mikraot Gedolot* on psalms. A similar interpretation of the latter verse can be found in Rabbi Jacob ben Hananel Sikili (late-thirteenth to early-fourteenth century) in *Torat ha'Minha*, homily 21, 203.

can assume that the Christian image of the falconer was transformed into the anointed messianic king, scion of the House of David, and not the Almighty Himself.⁴⁵ Thus the image depicts the coming of the Jewish messianic king, a sovereign of flesh and blood. This is emphasized by the scribe-masorator's omission of all the words referring to the Almighty in the verses he uses to depict the mounted falconer.⁴⁶ The possibility of representing the Almighty Himself is not acceptable in the Jewish context.⁴⁷ But the scribe adds yet another major feature. Via his tour-de-force scribal abilities, he leaves the reins unfinished and returns to complete them with a coveted verse that puts the Torah and the Jewish commandments in the hands of the Messiah.⁴⁸ The homily to verse 5 of Psalm 78, "For he established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel,"⁴⁹ asserts the eternal truth of the Torah and the Jewish commandments,⁵⁰ thus negating the refutation of the Jewish commandments by the Christians.

This page, then, also responds to two of the "hot" polemic questions of the time: Whether the Messiah will come as a corporal Messiah of flesh and blood or whether his arrival is the *Parousia*, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the revocation of the Jewish commandments.⁵¹

⁴⁵ In rabbinic literature, too, the Messiah is described as a corporal king; see, e.g., Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 34/b; for an English translation, see Neusner (1984–95), Tractate Berakhot chap. 5, 245, C. He is also identified as a scion of the House of David; see, e.g., Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a, Neusner (1984–95), Tractate Sukkah, vol. 6, 256, VI.B.

⁴⁶ This occurs very rarely. In all other instances the scribe-masorator does not skip the Almighty's names and frequently employs the common abbreviation used by Jewish scribes, i.e., one to three adjacent letters Yud from the Hebrew alphabet.

⁴⁷ Batterman (2002), 66, argues that heterodox, popular, nonobservant, and alternative Jewish tradition had the impulse to visualize God and that it is a deep-rooted bias that Jewish tradition allows no place for imaging God in visual terms. Examining Hebrew book illumination proves that the contrary is true and that indeed artists/patrons went to great length to avoid imaging God. Ample examples exist, such as the Sarajevo Haggadah's traditional use of a hand to represent the Divine or the transformation of the celestial marriage of Jesus and Maria-Ecclesia to the Shekhinah and Israel. Had such impetus as Michael Batterman describes existed, the image could have been taken directly to represent God and Shekhinah-Torah.

⁴⁸ See n. 44 for the manner in which he constructs the falconer's image.

⁴⁹ Hebrew-English Bible (1917).

⁵⁰ *Midrash Tehillim*, Psalm 78(1); *Yalkut Shimoni*, Psalms ref. 819; Rabbi Israel al-Nakawa's (d. 1391) *Menorat ha'Maor*, 'Talmud Torah' chap. 5, 233–234; *New Zohar*, *Megilat Ruth* 37b; Rabbi Joshua Ibn Shuaib's (first half of the fourteenth century) *Derashot RJ Ibn Shuaib*, sermon on the weekly portion of the Torah Jethro, Exodus chap. 18–20.

⁵¹ For a discussion of the corporality of the Messiah, see Lasker (1977), 105–134 especially 117–121.

From the thirteenth century on, religious polemic debate between Jews and Christians was very common. As scholars now believe, these disputes took place not only on an official public level, but were often spontaneous and held in private spheres.⁵² The main subjects of debate were the Trinity, the Messiah, the Virgin Birth, the question of death bringing atonement, resurrection of the dead, the sacraments, and the revocation of the Jewish commandments.⁵³ On many occasions rabbis were asked to write polemic answers that could be employed in response to Christian debaters,⁵⁴ especially in light of the pressures of the Mendicants concerning conversion. These disputes are evident not only in the polemic literature, but also in Responsa literature, philosophical treatises, Kabbalah, and Bible exegesis.⁵⁵ I suggest that the imagery of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor is yet another, visual, expression of this polemic discourse. Visual polemics, as scholars have begun to show in recent years, were intended for an audience that was aware of the Christian content of the model images and able to grasp the inverted meaning of the iconography and the strengthening of the stance of Judaism, which it sought to preserve.⁵⁶

In conclusion, the two pages of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor discussed in this chapter constitute a response to some of the major questions that were part of the polemical discourse of the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries: the nature of God, the Messiah, the refutation of the Jewish commandments, and the *Verus Israel*. The discovery of the underdrawing that remained unfinished and eventually made way for another design and deciphering its meaning in tandem with its counterpart, the mounted falconer, disclosed the full significance of these images as planned by the scribe-artist.⁵⁷

Copying the mirrored scroll from the recto of the page was a quick and efficient solution for coping with the patron's apparent decision not to complete the planned image. As to the reason for this decision, I can only speculate that the apparent Christian roots of the imagery and the association with the celestial couple caused some discomfort, especially

⁵² Ben-Shalom, (2003), 35–37, 41; Glick (2004), 158–159; Berger (1986), 596.

⁵³ For works on Jewish polemics, see Lasker (1977); Maccoby (1982); Chazan (1989); and idem (1992).

⁵⁴ See n. 25.

⁵⁵ Ben-Shalom (2003), 24; Tautner-Kormann (1993), 4–5.

⁵⁶ Batterman (2002), 58–59, 87; Lasker (1977), 163; Tautner-Kormann (1993), 2.

⁵⁷ The overall message that emerges from analyzing the illuminations constitutes the fourth and significant chapter of my dissertation; Halperin (in prep.).

owing to its abundant representation in cathedral sculpture.⁵⁸ Moreover, although Ashkenazi influence was far-reaching in Jewish Spanish culture, the Jewish antithesis of the celestial couple—the Shekhinah and the Nation of Israel—that was developed in Ashkenaz was never fully accepted in Sephardi culture. This unfamiliar image was thus probably rejected. Perhaps its depiction of the Divine, not seconded in Sephardi art though transformed, was too overt. Leaving out the couple and covering the underdrawing with the scroll design diluted the original polemic content of the page.

Whatever the reason, what is clear is that the scribe of the Catalan Micrography Mahzor was not merely a scribe-masorator-artist, but a learned scholar who was daring in his designs, familiar with the iconography and the motifs of Christian art, and apparently well versed in contemporary Christian literature. The last he employed toward a polemic end by altering them so that they ultimately reinforced Judaism. We thus perceive here an artist who conceived the polemic message in his own way. The fact that his idea was rejected by the patron sheds some light on the extent to which he was independent, but also shows the degree to which he depended on his patron after all.

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⁵⁸ Kosmer (1973), 90–91 and n. 129.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. Initial word panel and Piyyutim for Rosh Hashanah, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Hebr 8°6527, fol. 16r–15v.
- Fig. 2. Mounted falconer and vine scroll, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, fol. 10r–9v.
- Fig. 3. Unexecuted drawing of the couple seen with infrared photography beneath the Vine scroll, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, fol. 9v.
- Fig. 4. Hunt scene and knotted foliate interlace, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, fol. 5r–4v.
- Fig. 5. ‘From Me with Lebanon My Bride’, *Liepzig Mahzor*, Leipzig, University Library, V. 1102, vol. 1 fol. 64v.
- Fig. 6. Humility, *Somme le Roy*, London, British Library, Add. 28162, fol. 5v.

A WOMAN'S HEBREW PRAYER BOOK AND THE ART OF MARIANO DEL BUONO*

Evelyn M. Cohen

The fifteenth century witnessed a zenith in the production of illuminated Hebrew manuscripts in Renaissance Italy. A prayer book made for a woman currently housed in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary exemplifies the fine decoration found in some of these codices.¹ The text begins with the prayers recited daily, followed by the prayer for the amelioration of dreams, the liturgy for the Sabbath, *Rosh Hodesh*, the festivals of Hanukkah and Purim, readings for the special Sabbaths preceding Passover, *eruv tavshilin*, the Haggadah, and the liturgy for Passover. It seems likely, based on the physical makeup of the manuscript, that the scribe intentionally ended the volume at this point.² A second tome containing the remaining cycle of prayers traditionally

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¹ New York, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8641. The manuscript was purchased from the estate of Michael Zagayski at an auction held at the Parke-Bernet Galleries in New York on May 13, 1970, lot 214. The prayer book had previously belonged to Mrs. Meyer S. Goldschmidt.

² The manuscript comprises twenty-seven quires, of which the first twenty-six are composed of ten parchment leaves, arranged according to Gregory's rule. As the final quire is composed of only eight leaves, it seems likely the scribe deliberately ended the volume with the recitation for Passover that concludes at the end of the page.

Catchwords, sometimes placed within decorative forms such as pots and fountains, appear at the end of all quires except for the first, fourth, eleventh, and twenty-second. Of special interest is the last catchword, written on folio 260v, where the word is placed within a drawing of the head of a man depicted in profile and wearing a cap. This, the sole catchword to be embellished with a human form, appears on the only page in the work that contains a human hand, which is placed in the outer margin and points down to the bottom of the page. The manuscript contains 268 folios, measuring $5\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$ in. (14.5×11.4 cm), although the leaves probably were trimmed at a later point in time. The text block measures $3\frac{1}{4} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ in. (8.2×5.6 cm) and is ruled for 15 lines per page. The main text was written using dark brown ink in a square script, while the numerous instructions, reflecting local practices that are worthy of further study, were penned in an Italian rabbinic script. Some words of the text were censored by means of erasure.

included in Italian prayer books possibly was intended and perhaps even produced, although there is no evidence of its existence.

The manuscript in its current state does not include a colophon, so the patron who commissioned the work cannot be identified. The text makes it clear, however, that it was intended for use by a woman. The wording of three of the gender-specific daily morning benedictions (fol. 7v) was altered from the traditional male form. The woman thanks God for making her as he wished (שעשיתני כרצונך), for making her a Jewess (שעשיתני ישראלית), and for not making her a servant (שלא עשיתני שפחה). The traditional wording was added in the inner margin by a later hand, presumably by a subsequent male owner.

The inclusion of a text for the conclusion of the Sabbath morning reading of the Torah is worthy of note (fol. 126r). In accordance with a tradition found in the Roman rite, in addition to the standard recitation: "He who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may he bless this entire congregation..." (מי שבירך אברהם יצחק ויעקב), a second passage relates specifically to women: "He who blessed Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, may he bless every Jewess who makes a mantle for the Torah..." (מי שבירך שרה רבקה רחל ולאה הוא יברך כל בת ישראל שעושה מעיל או מטפחת לכבוד התורה והמתקנת נר לכבוד התורה הק"ב"ה ישלם שכרה ויתן לה גמולה הטוב ונאמר אמן).³

In addition to the decoration found on the opening page (Fig. 1), six initial words are adorned with elaborate panels.⁴ The first five are written in black ink and surrounded by painted frames and gold-leaf borders (Figs. 2–4). They are further adorned with floral designs of a characteristically Florentine type. The illumination of the last decorated initial word panel in this manuscript differs from the others. The word *Ha* in blue at the beginning of the text of *Ha Lahma Anya* is embellished with a gold-leaf panel decorated with fine tooling, a technique that is rarely found in Hebrew manuscripts of this period (Fig. 5).

The finest illumination in the prayer book is found on the opening page (fol. 1r). The letters of the initial word *Mikhtam* are painted in

³ The passage appears in the *Mahzor Roma* printed by Bnei Soncino in Soncino and Casal Maggiore, 1485/6, and in subsequent printed editions.

⁴ They appear on folios 4r (רבונו כל), 19r (לעולם), 26v (ברוך), 37v (ברוך), 84r (יהי), and 201r (הא). The letters of the first three examples are surrounded by squiggle work.

blue on a gold-leaf panel that does not seem to have been tooled.⁵ A decorative bar of blue adorned with gold appears above and below the word. An elaborate border containing six male figures, three half-length and three bust-length, frames the page. Five of the men appear to be prophets; four of them hold scrolls devoid of text. The sixth and largest figure, placed in the center of the outer margin, depicts King David, crowned and nimbed, playing a psaltery (Fig. 6). He is gazing upward, and his head, depicted in a three-quarter view, is appropriately turned toward the large initial word that begins the first verse of Psalms 16: “*Mikhtam* of David. Protect me God, for I seek refuge in you.”⁶ Above the half-length figure of the king, a putto plays a *lira da braccio*, and beneath him another putto sings while accompanying himself on a lute. Both putti have red wings and stand before a landscape. Within the bottom border, under the text, two more putti with red wings, standing in a similar outdoor setting, support a shield emblazoned with a family emblem showing a rampant lion viewed in profile, turned toward the left, facing a green stalk (Fig. 7).⁷ The frame includes other decorative elements, such as two pearls placed within golden forms at the top of the page and a putto standing on what may be a fountain within a landscape at the inner margin. Unfortunately, the page has sustained considerable damage and some of the details of the forms, as well as the letters of the text, are difficult to discern.

The manuscript was first described by Georg Swarzenski and Rosy Schilling, who believed that the art was created around 1500.⁸ They surmised that the putti on folio 1r resemble the work of “Boccardini” and that the art was Tuscan, probably Florentine. It is likely that they were

⁵ No traces are visible today, but this might be the result of the damaged condition of the gold leaf on this page.

⁶ Toward the top of the page the scribe wrote “These are the seventy-two verses that were compiled by Rabbi Moses, of blessed memory,” a reference to Nahmanides (1194–1270). The first line of text, beginning with the large initial word, is the first verse of Psalms 16, after which the traditional verses are copied. Versions of the seventy-two verses, which relate to the kabbalistic seventy-two lettered name of God, are found in the Soncino *Mahzor Roma* 1485/6, as well as in the *Rothschild Mahzor*, New York, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8892, and in other manuscripts from Italy, but the order of the verses is not always the same.

⁷ In Renaissance Italy, prominent Jewish families, in emulation of their Christian associates, created family emblems, sometimes incorporating visual puns on their names. For a description and discussion of these armorial devices, see Roth (1967), 165–84, and Pisa (1984), 291–461. The family to which this emblem belongs has yet to be identified.

⁸ Swarzenski and Schilling (1929), 257, no. 233.

referring to the Florentine illuminator Giovanni Boccardi (1460–1529), also known as Giovanni di Giuliano Boccardi, Boccardi il vecchio, or Boccardino.⁹ The arrangement of the decorative elements around the page, the soft rendering of the landscape, and more importantly the appearance of the facial features, however, make an attribution to the prolific Florentine illuminator Mariano del Buono (1433/4–1504), or his workshop, more convincing.¹⁰

At least seven illuminated Hebrew manuscripts have been ascribed to Mariano and his workshop, a greater number than are attributed to any other Italian master. Perhaps the first scholar to associate this artist with a Hebrew text was Annarosa Garzelli, who credited him with the decoration of a commentary on the Pentateuch by Nahmanides,¹¹ as well as the illumination of a *Sifrei Emet* written for Jacob, the son of Benjamin of Montalcino in 1467.¹² Luisa Mortara Ottolenghi concurred with this last attribution¹³ to which she added a copy of Yosef Albo's *Sefer Ha'Ikkarim* that she found to be similar in style to the commentary by Nahmanides.¹⁴ She believed Mariano also might have illuminated a Psalter with the commentary of David Kimhi;¹⁵ a prayer book belonging to Abraham, the son of Jacob;¹⁶ a prayer book copied in Monselice in

⁹ For information concerning this artist, see Levi D'Ancona (1962), 149–154; Garzelli (1985), 80–81 and 341–346; Levi D'Ancona (2001–02), 225–230; and Galizzi (2004), 113–116.

¹⁰ I am grateful to Mirella Levi D'Ancona for suggesting this attribution and to Jonathan Alexander and Angela Dillon Busi for their confirmation. For information concerning Mariano del Buono, see Levi d'Ancona (1962), 175–181; Garzelli (1985), vol. 1, 189–215 and vol. 2, 341–346; Alexander (1994), 118–119 and 150, cat. nos. 49, 68, and 69; Alexander, Marrow, and Freeman Sandler (2005), cat. nos. 82 and 100; and Galizzi (2004), 727–730.

¹¹ Manchester, the John Rylands University Library, Ms. hebr. 8; see Garzelli (1985), vol. 1, 207 and vol. 2, 402.

¹² New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library MS 409, Florence, 1467; see Garzelli, (1985) vol. 1, 207. The colophon (fol. 187v) indicates the patron and the date the work was completed (5 July [5]227 [= 1467]). The scribe identified himself at the beginning of the inscription, but his name was subsequently erased. Pasternak (2002), 187, believed that the manuscript was penned by Isaac ben Ovadia of Forlì.

¹³ Mortara Ottolenghi (1993–94), 92.

¹⁴ Rovigo, Biblioteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi, Ms. Silvestriana 220. This attribution is found in Mortara Ottolenghi (1997), 982–983.

¹⁵ Berlin, Staatsbibliothek SPk Ms. Hamilton 547, commonly referred to as the *Hamilton Psalter*. For the possible attribution to Mariano, see Mortara Ottolenghi (1997), 989.

¹⁶ London, British Library Add. 16577. The manuscript is described in Margoliouth (1905), vol. 2, no. 630, 234–238. For the attribution to Mariano, see Mortara Ottolenghi (1993–94), 93.

1489;¹⁷ and some of the illuminations in the *Rothschild Mahzor* written for Elia, the son of Yoav of Vigevano of the Gallico family in Florence in 1490.¹⁸ The woman's prayer book in the Seminary Library should also be included among the works attributed to Mariano del Buono.

Many of the Latin manuscripts associated with Mariano and his workshop contain pages with elaborate borders inhabited by figures in frames and with putti supporting coats of arms in the lower border that are similar to those in the Hebrew prayer book.¹⁹ Two of Mariano's finest Latin manuscripts, in particular, are worth comparing to this work.

The first is a Breviary produced for the Ospedale of Santa Maria Nuova in 1477, which is considered a turning point in Mariano's style.²⁰ Although superior in quality to the Hebrew manuscript, the details of the rendering of the facial features, particularly the mouths and soft nondetailed eyes are similar in style. Both utilize as a decorative element a putto standing on a fountainlike form in landscape. Especially striking is the relationship between the prophet in the center of the upper border of the opening page of the Hebrew prayer book (Fig. 8) with the similarly placed figure of God the Father on folio 161v of the Breviary. In both, the bust-length figures of the elderly men, their hair parted in the middle and their white beards long and pointed, have similarly shaped mouths formed as arcs that turn down at the corners, creating a serious, almost frowning, expression. Both men convey the impression

¹⁷ Parma, Biblioteca Palatina Ms. Parm. 2738; see Mortara Ottolenghi (1993–94), 93 and Mortara Ottolenghi (1997), 983. The scribe did not include his name in the colophon, but as Benjamin Richler noted, the name Ephraim, which is pointed out on two folios in this manuscript, might be that of the scribe; see Richler (2001), 228, no. 939.

¹⁸ New York, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, MS 8892; see Mortara Ottolenghi (1994–95), 93 and Mortara Ottolenghi (1997), 983. In the latter, the author speculated that although not mentioned in the colophon, a member of the Norsa family might have been involved in the commissioning of the manuscript. She incorrectly assumed there was no documentation of a marriage between the Gallico and Norsa families, whereas in fact Elia's son David married Giusta Norsa, which explains the frequent appearance of the Norsa family emblem in this work; see Luzzati (1998), 82 and Luzzati (2002), 49, note 52, as well as E. M. Cohen (2005–06), 172. Until recently the date in the colophon had been read incorrectly as 1492. For the correct dating of the manuscript, see Wachtel (2005–06), 160–168.

¹⁹ An obvious point of departure is the treatment of the decoration of the letters. In Mariano's works, as in Latin manuscripts generally, initial letters are frequently embellished. Hebrew does not utilize capital letters, however, and in place of decorated initials, illuminated Hebrew works employ ornamental initial words in panels.

²⁰ Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, ms. 68, fol. 161v; see Levi D'Ancona (1962), 177 and 179 and Garzelli (1985), vol. 1, 203.

that their eyes are closed as they gaze down at the text beneath them. The figures gesture differently in keeping with their disparate identities. In the Breviary the nimbed figure of God the Father lifts his hands with his palms turned toward the viewer. Three of the fingers of his right hand are raised in a pose of benediction. In the Hebrew prayer book, the prophet holds a scroll in his left hand; in place of a symbolic gesture, he rests his right hand on the gold frame beneath him.

The figures in another Breviary display the same facial types that are found in the Hebrew prayer book.²¹ Some figures found on folio 354r are particularly noteworthy. God the Father appears in the center of the upper border; once again his mouth curves creating a ponderous expression and his eyelids appear to be closed as he gazes down in the direction of the text. Putti, depicted with protruding stomachs and small, minimally articulated eyes, appear in the borders on either side of the text. Reminiscent of the Hebrew prayer book, one of the two putti in the left-hand border who have musical instruments plays a *lira da braccio*.

The softly rendered landscape elements and the stocky figures, seemingly lacking necks that appear in the woman's prayer book in New York, are in keeping with Mirella Levi D'Ancona's characterization of Mariano's style.²² These features are found in another Hebrew manuscript, characterized by Elliott Horowitz as a liturgical handbook.²³ The work contains two full-page miniatures and twenty-six text illustrations that are embellished with Florentine floral motifs, as are many of the pages throughout. The figures in this work, their body types, and the rendering of their facial features, particularly their eyes and mouths, are similar to those in the woman's prayer book as well as to those in other Latin codices attributed to Mariano del Buono.²⁴ In light of the

²¹ Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, ms. Riccardiano 372; see Garzelli (1985), vol. 1, 210–211, who believed it dates to around 1479.

²² See Levi D'Ancona (1962), 177.

²³ Princeton, Princeton University Library Garrett Ms. 26. The manuscript lacks a colophon but probably was created around the time of the woman's prayer book. For a discussion of some of the illustrations and a summary of the earlier bibliography for this manuscript, see Horowitz (1993–94), 98–111.

²⁴ Jonathan Alexander kindly provided me with a copy of his unpublished description of this manuscript, which he wrote in 1994. He noted the similarities between the illuminations of this work and others attributed to the Florentine artists Monte and Gherardo del Flora and to Mariano del Buono.

numerous Hebrew manuscripts now associated with this illuminator, the ties the artist may have had to the Jewish community of Florence are worthy of further examination.

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Illustrations

- Fig. 1. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 2. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 4r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 3. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 19r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 4. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 37v. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 5. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 201r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 6. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—King David. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 7. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—family emblem. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Fig. 8. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—prophet in center of upper border. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.

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ILLUSTRATION SECTION

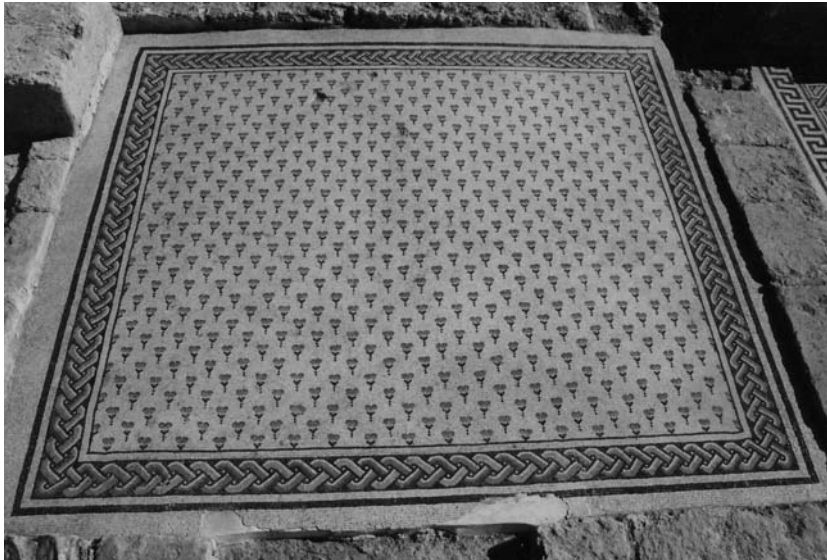


Fig. 1. Lattice pattern of elongated white scales with polychrome rosebuds in their center, decorating one of the carpets found in the Nile Festival Building.



Fig. 2. Huntress and male warrior depicted in a panel installed next to the conjectured eastern entrance, inside the basilical hall of the Nile Festival Building.



Fig. 3. Two naked hunters standing beside a tree with a wild boar at their feet; found in a panel located at the other side of the entrance to the basilical hall of the Nile Festival Building.



Fig. 4. Mosaic with the dancing Amazons found in the building's eastern room.



Fig. 5. The Nile mosaic.

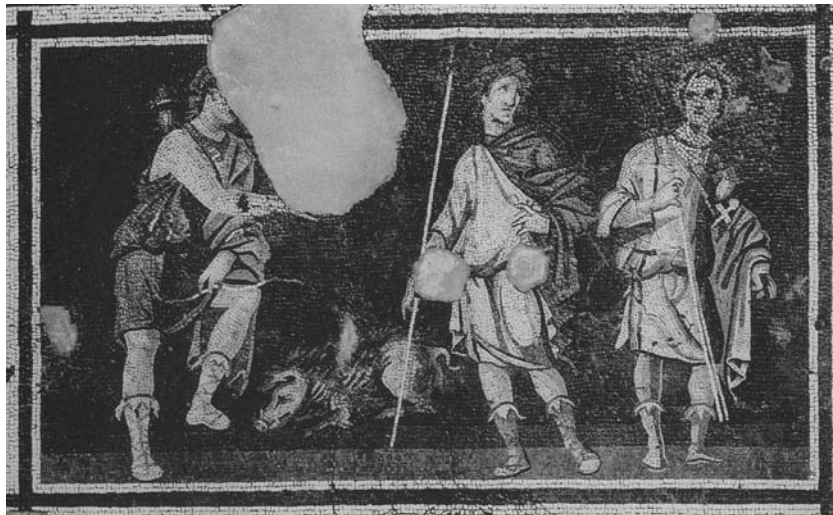


Fig. 6. Antioch: Panel depicting the quarrel over the spoils of the Calydonian boar.

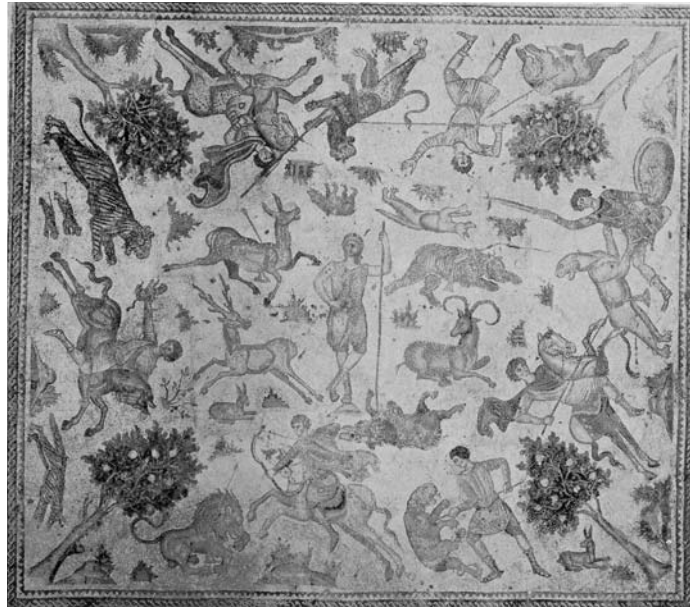


Fig. 7. Antioch: Worchester Hunt mosaic.

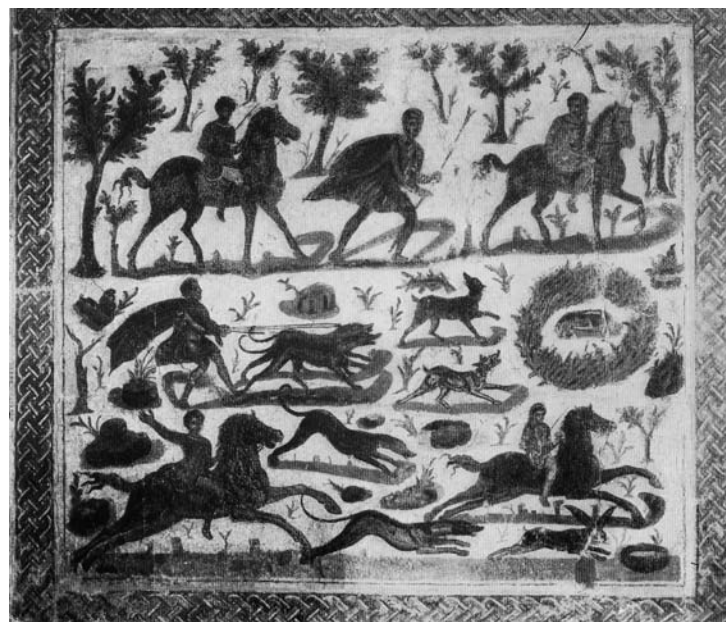


Fig. 8. El-Djem, the Hare Hunt.



Fig. 1. Jewish gold-glass. Roman catacomb (unknown origin) fourth century, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Fig. 2. Jewish gold-glass. Rome, probably the Jewish catacomb of Vignia Randanini, fourth century, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Frühchristlich-byzantinische Sammlung.



Fig. 3. Eucharistic banquet. Catacomb of Callixtus, Rome, wall painting, second quarter of the third century.

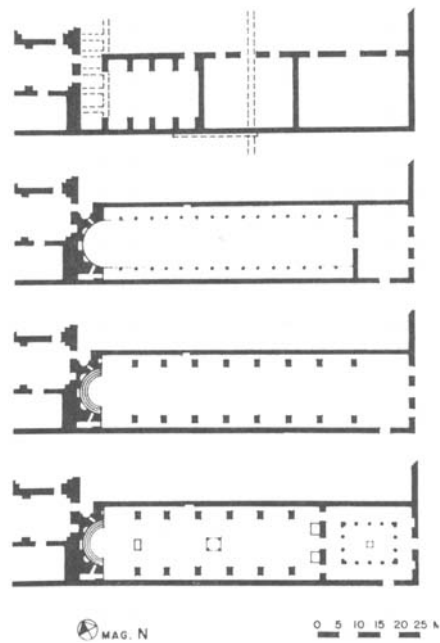


Fig. 4. Sardis synagogue, ground plan, third to fourth century.



Fig. 1. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–245, Infancy of Moses.



Fig. 2. Via Latina Catacomb, Rome, first half of fourth century, cub C, Israelites at Mount Sinai.



Fig. 3. Via Latina Catacomb, Rome, first half of fourth century, cub O, Israelites at Mount Sinai (Resurrection of Lazarus).

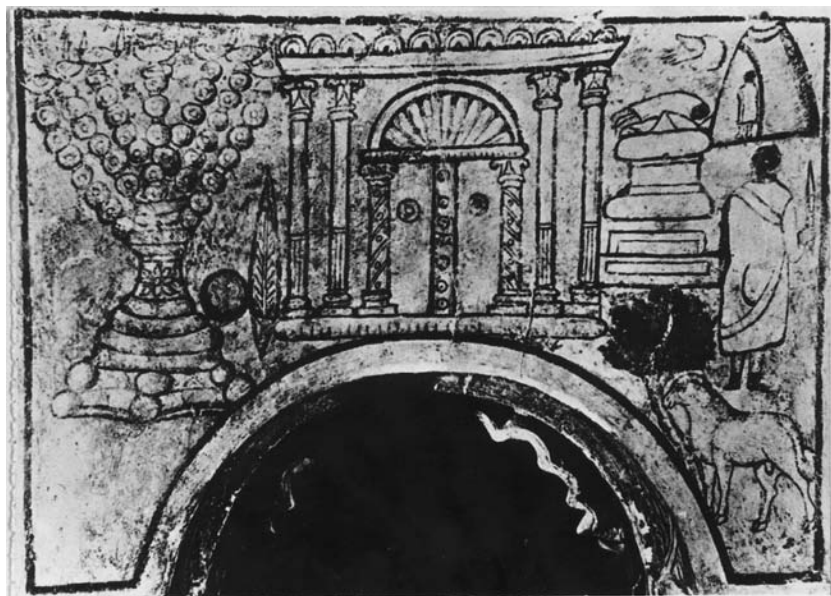


Fig. 4. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–45, Torah Shrine.



Fig. 5. Synagogue of Dura Europos, Syria, 244–45, reconstruction of the mural above the Torah Shrine: the Tree of Life.



Fig. 6. Synagogue of Bet Alpha, early sixth century, mosaic pavement.

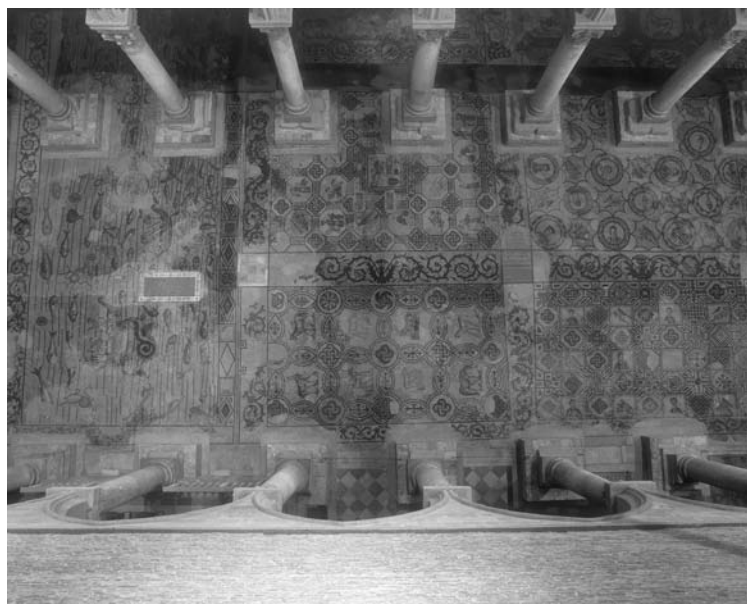


Fig. 1. The Story of Jonas, Floor Mosaic, Aquileia, early fourth century, Archivio Seat/Alinari Archive.



Fig. 2. The Story of Jonas, Sarcophagus, Lateran Museum, Vatican City, late third century, Alinari Archive.



Fig. 1. Khirbat al-Samra: Church of St. Peter.



Fig. 2. Khirbat Dariya/az-Za'tara/Smad: The bema of the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus: anonymous donors.



Fig. 3. Gerasa: The bema of Chapel of Elias, Maria; and Soreg: Elias, Maria, and Soreg.



Fig. 4. Gerasa, Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damianus (533): Theodore the paramonarius; Georgia: John son of Astricius and Kalloeonistus.



Fig. 5. Umm al-Rasas, Church of St. Paul (second half of the sixth century): Sergis and Rabbus.



Fig. 6. Umm al-Rasas, Church of Bishop Sergius (587/8): Robab; Ouadia son of Olesu; John, Barica, and Zongon, sons of Porphyrius; Soel, Peter, and John, sons of Sophia.

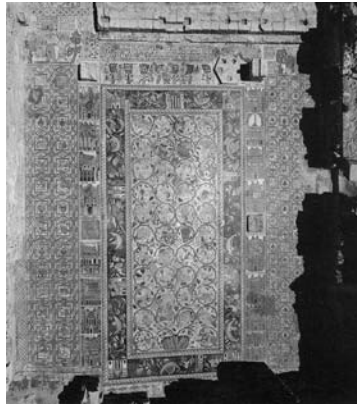


Fig. 7. Umm al-Rasas, Church of St. Stephen: Samuel, Abib son of Zugon, Kaium monk of Phisga, and John.



Fig. 8. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, Church of St. George: John son of Ammonius.



Fig. 9. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat, Upper Chapel of the Priest John (565).



Fig. 1. Paul Friedländer's reconstruction of the lost painting from Gaza.



Fig. 2. Gerhard Krahmer's reconstruction of the lost painting from Gaza.

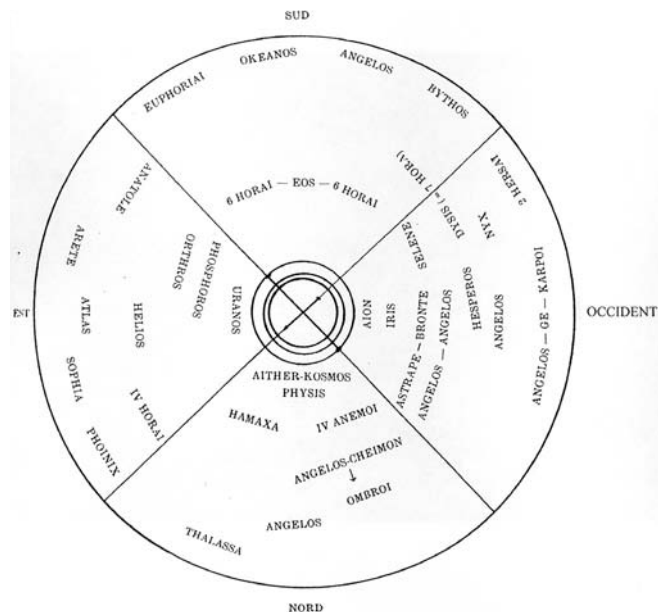


Fig. 3. Cupane's revision of Krahmer's suggested reconstruction.

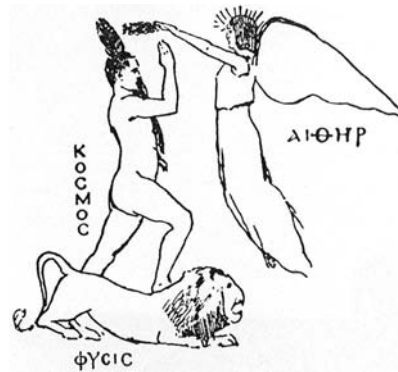
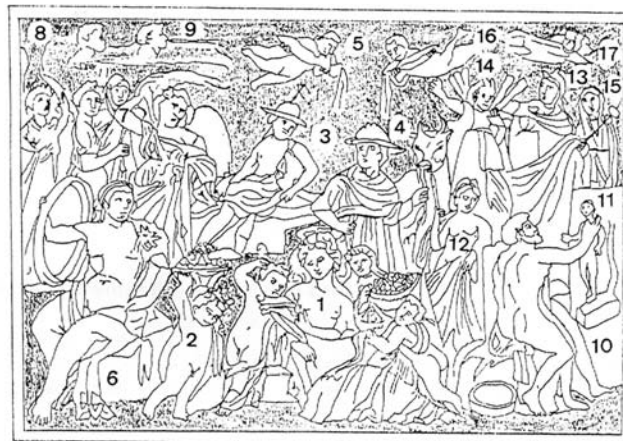


Fig. 6. The group of Cosmos, Physis, and Aither in the lost painting from Gaza.



1 -	Ge (Gaia; Mother Earth)	10 ΠΡΟΜΗΘΕΥΣ	Prometheus
2 ΚΑΡΠΟΙ	Karpoi (fruits)	11 ΠΡΩΤΟΠΛΑΣΤΟΣ	Protoplastos ('First created')
3 ΓΕΩΡΓΙΑ	Georgia (agriculture)	12 -	Aphrodite (Venus)
4 ΤΡΙΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ	Triptolemos (cattle-breeding)	13 ΕΡΜΗΣ	Hermes (Mercury)
5 ΔΡΟΣΟΙ	Drosoi (dew)	14 ΨΥΧΗ	Psyche ('soul' or 'butterfly')
6 ΑΙΩΝ	Aion (Eternity)	15 -	veiled woman (Alcestis?)
7 ΤΡΟΠΑΙ	Tropai (Four Seasons)	16 ΣΕΦΥΡΟΣ	Zephyros (west wind)
8 ΝΟΤΟΣ	Notos (south wind)	17 ΒΟΡΕΑΣ	Boreas (north wind)
9 ΕΥΡΟΣ	Euros (east wind)		

Fig. 7. The cosmological mosaic from Shahba-Philippopolis [after M. Immerzeel, "A Matter of Life or Death. The Mosaic from Shahba (Philippopolis) in the National Museum in Damascus," *Essays on Christian Art and Culture in the Middle East 2* (Leiden: 1999), 63–71].

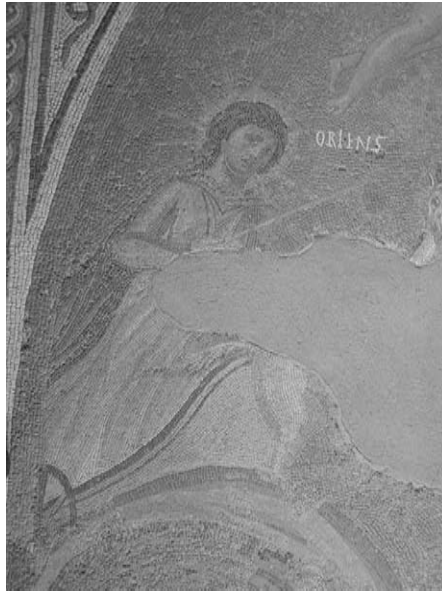


Fig. 8. The figure of the rising Sun (*Oriens*) in the cosmological mosaic in the House of the Mithraeum in Emerita (Mérida), Spain.



Fig. 9. Helios as Sol Invictus, the signs of the zodiac, and the seasons in the synagogue at Hammath-Tiberias.

SHULAMITH LADERMAN



Fig. 1. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 38v.



Fig. 2. *Christian Topography*, Sinai, Saint Catherine Monastery, cod. 1186, fol. 65v.

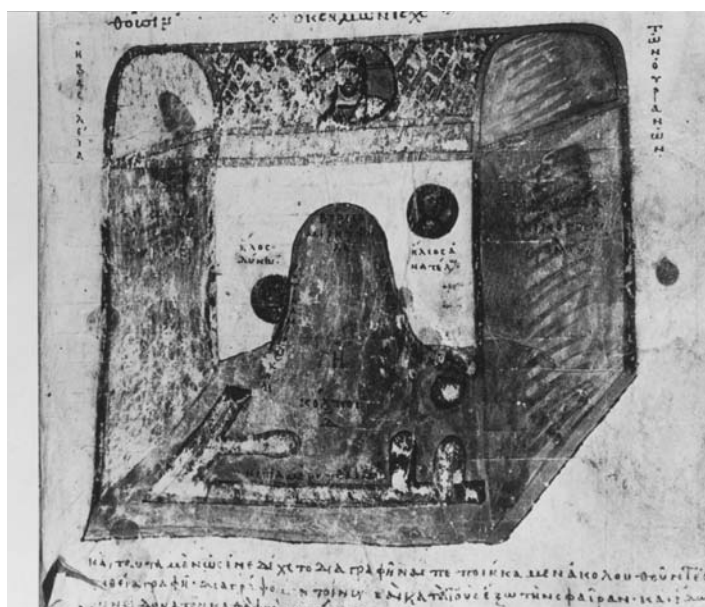


Fig. 3. *Christian Topography*, Sinai, Saint Catherine Monastery, cod. 1186, fol. 69r.



Fig. 4. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 43r.



Fig. 5. Tetrachma of Bar Kochba.



Fig. 6. *Christian Topography*, Sinai, Saint Catherine Monastery, cod. 1186, fol. 82r.



Fig. 7. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 48r.



Fig. 8. *Christian Topography*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. gr. 699, fol. 89r.

HERBERT L. KESSLER



Fig. 1. Sacrifice of Isaac, *Christian Topography*, Florence, Bib. Laur. Cod. Plut. IX.28, fol. 132v.

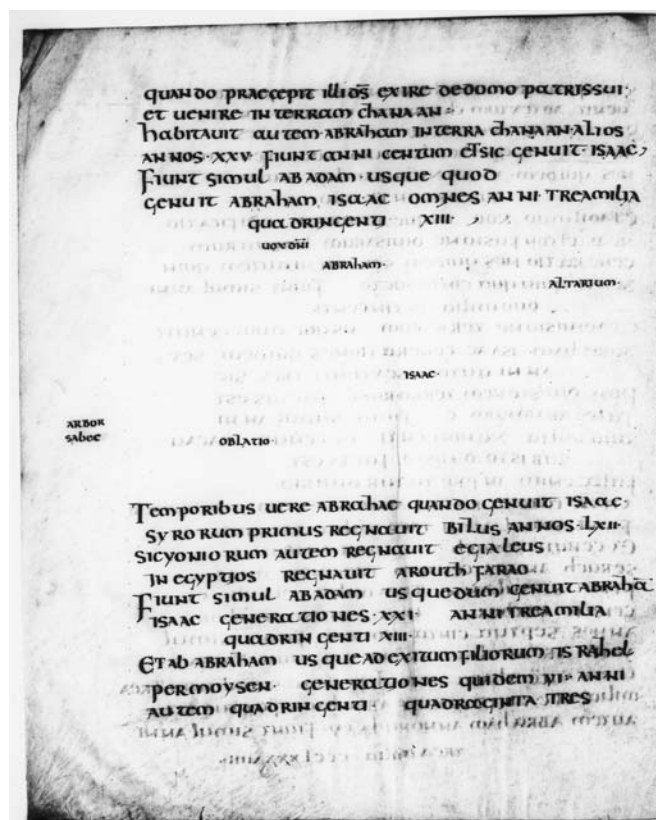


Fig. 2. Sacrifice of Isaac, mosaic, Beth Alpha.

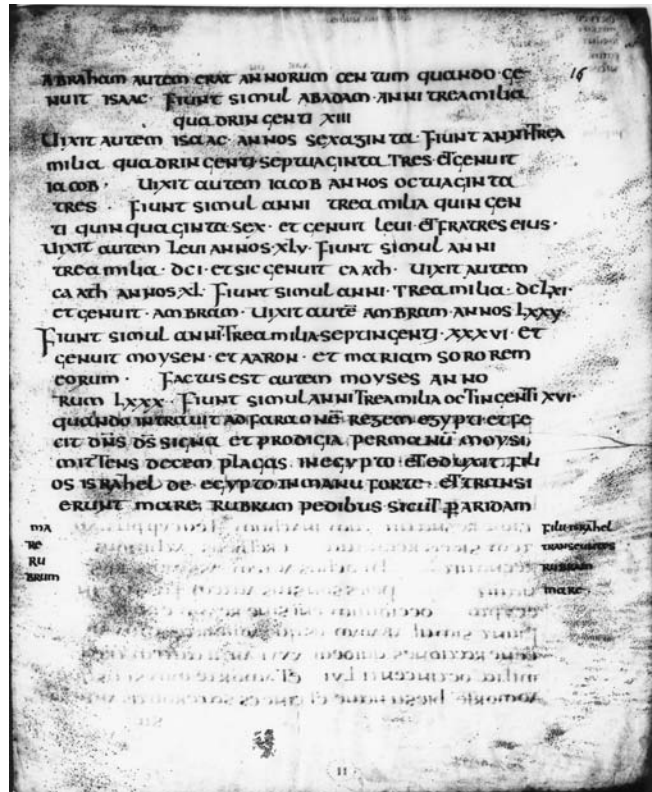


Fig. 3. Labels for Sacrifice of Isaac, Codex Scaligeri, Paris, BnF, MS 4884, fol. 15v.



Fig. 4. Labels for Crossing of Red Sea, Codex Scaligeri, Paris, BnF, MS 4884, fol. 16r.

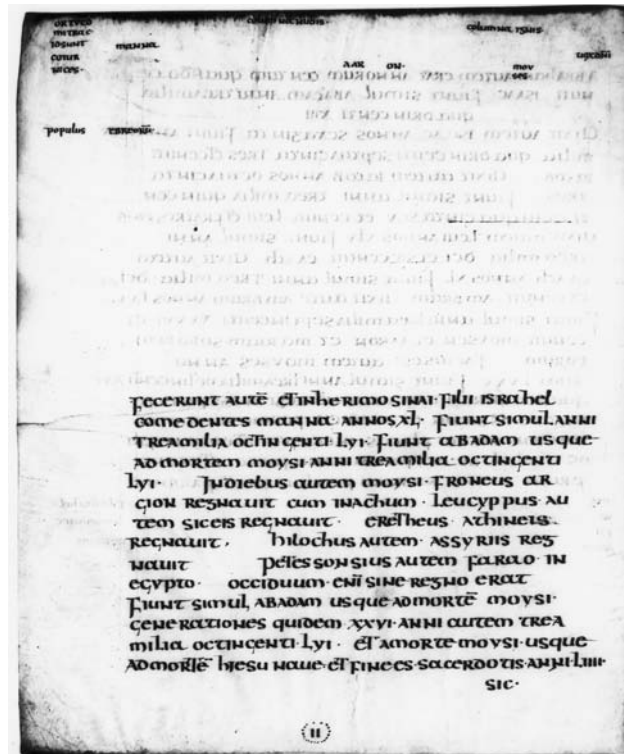


Fig. 5. Crossing of Red Sea, *Christian Topography*, Florence, Bib. Laur. Cod. Plut. IX.28, fol. 103v.

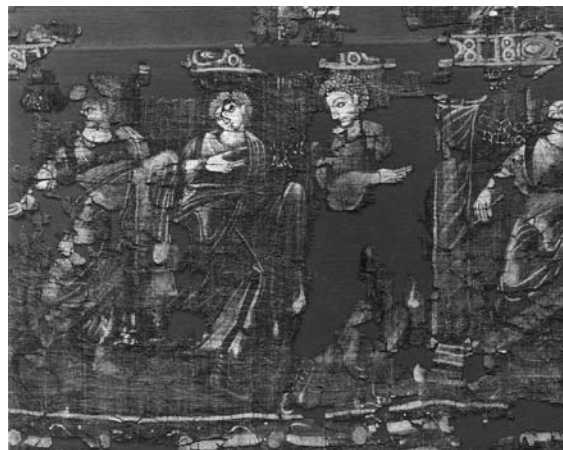


Fig. 6. Labels for Miracle of Manna and Quails, Codex Scaligeri, Paris, BnF, MS 4884, fol. 16v.



Fig. 7. Miracle of Manna, painted cloth, Riggisberg, Abegg Stiftung.



Fig. 8. Sacrifice of Isaac, *Christian Topography*, olim Smyrna, Evangelical School, MS. B. 8, p. 178 (Paris, Institut G. Millet).



Fig. 9. Sacrifice of Isaac, *Christian Topography*, Vatican, Bib. Apos., Cod. gr. 699, fol. 59r.

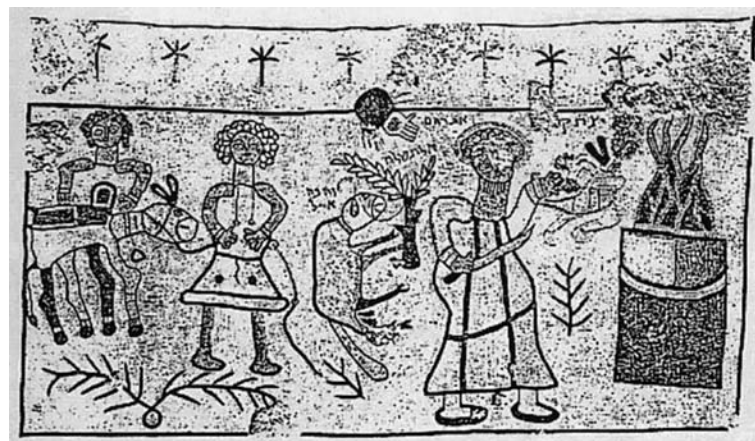


Fig. 10. Tabernacle, Mt. Sinai, St. Catherine's Monastery.

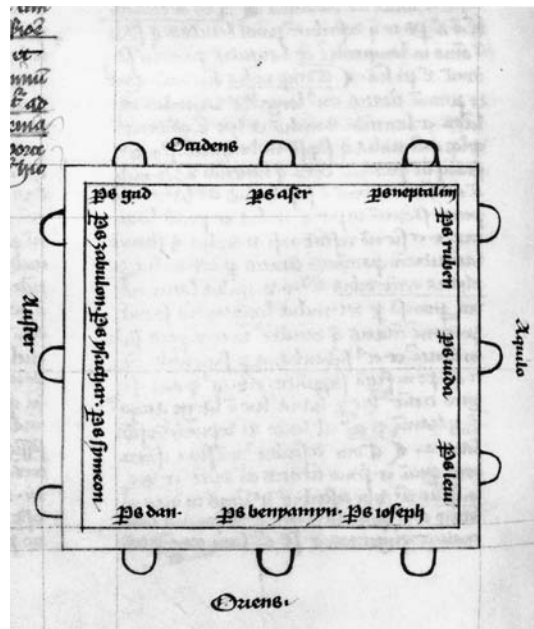


Fig. 1. Holy City with twelve gates, plan, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super prophetas*, 1423–1425 (Utrecht, University Library, Ms. 252, fol. 210v).

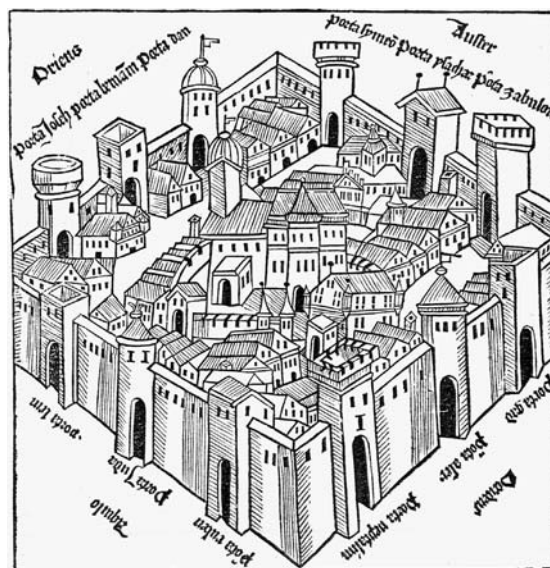
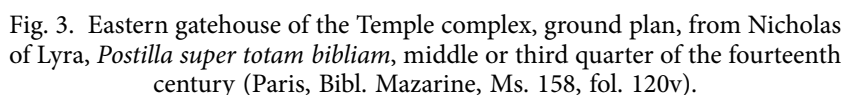
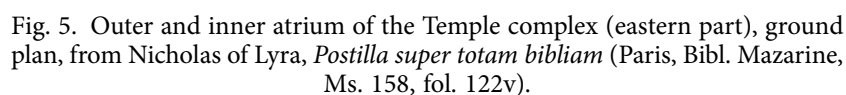


Fig. 2. Holy City with twelve gates, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.





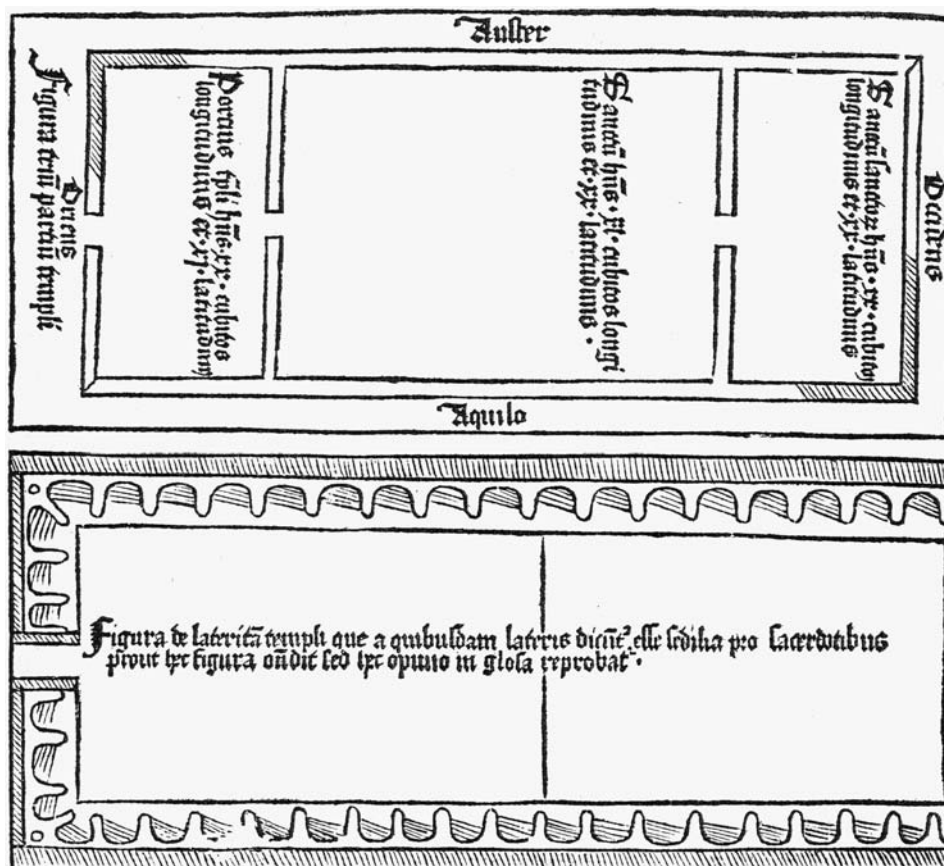


Fig. 6. Plan of the Temple and interior with *sedilia*, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla litteralis in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.

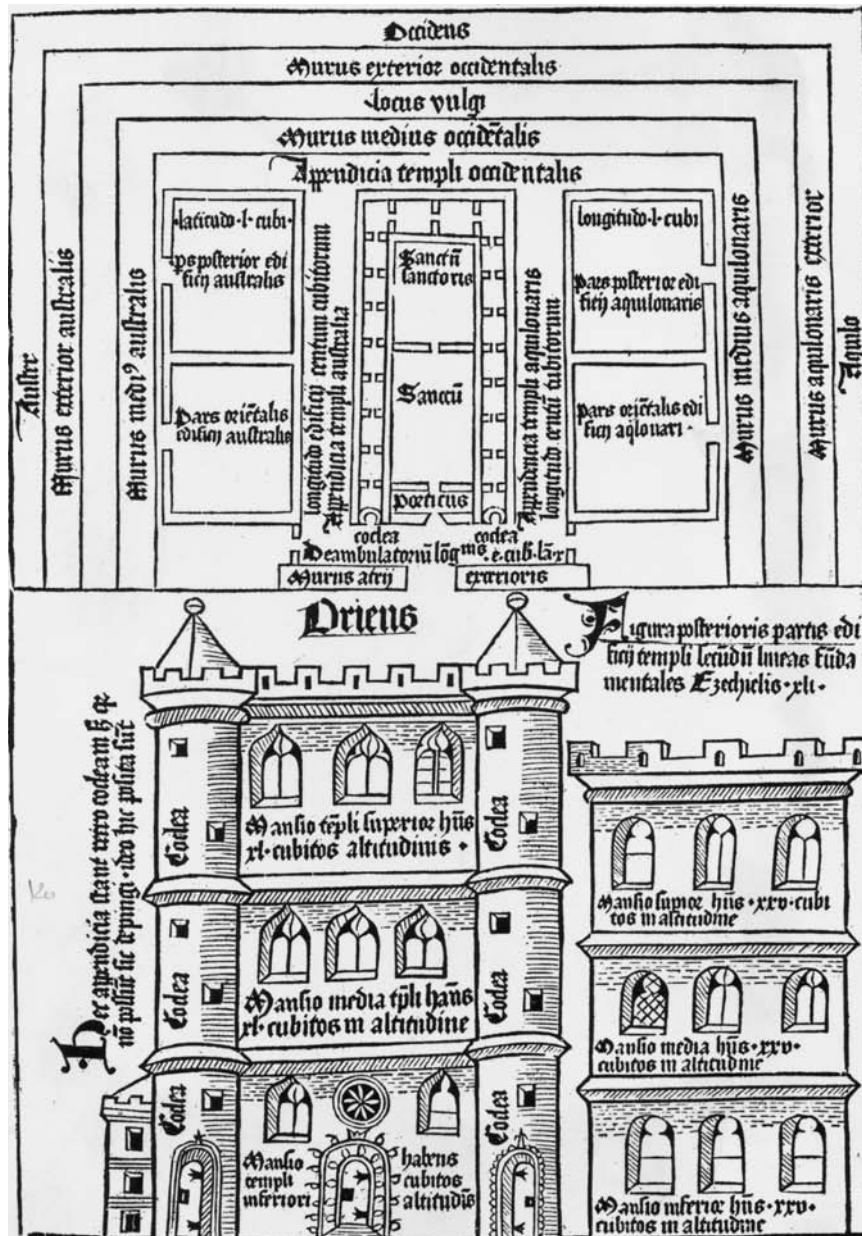


Fig. 7. Ground plan of the western part of the complex with the Temple and adjoining structures (above) and elevation of the Temple façade (below, left) and adjoining structure (right), from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*, Strasbourg, Johannes Gruninger, 1492.

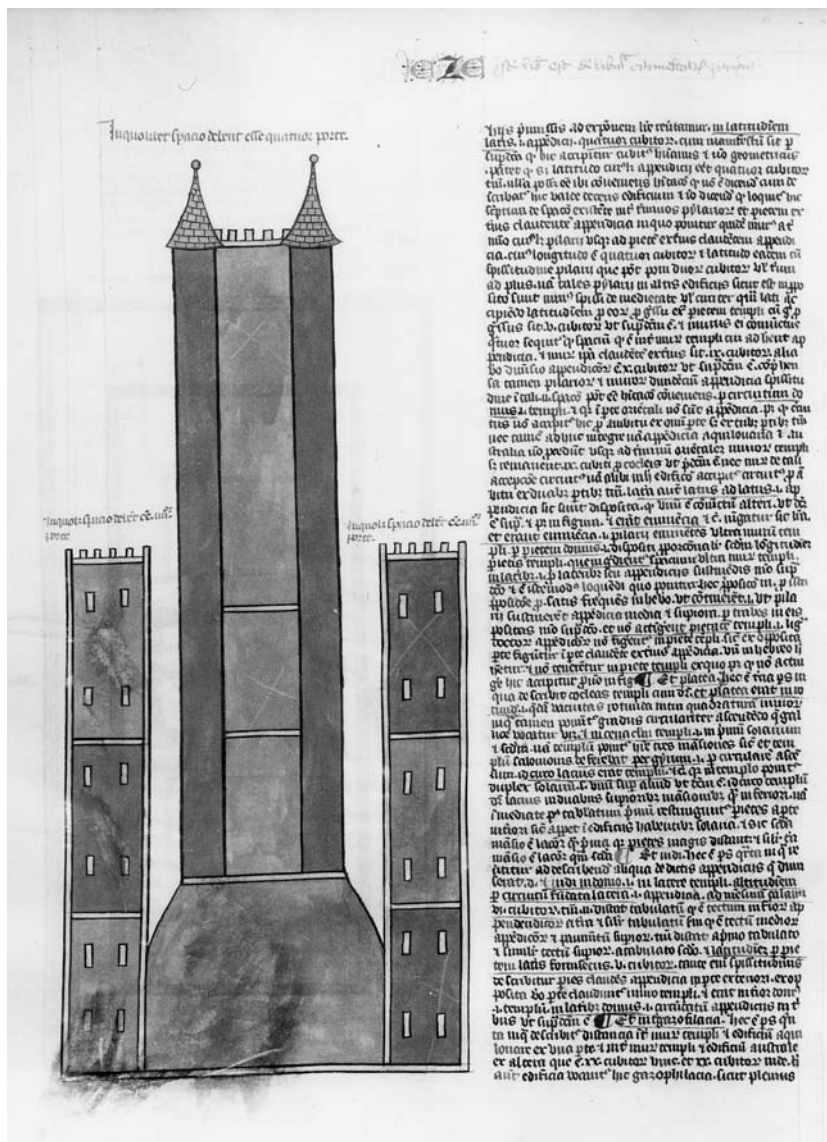


Fig. 8. The Temple and adjoining structures, elevation, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibiam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms. 158, fol. 124v).

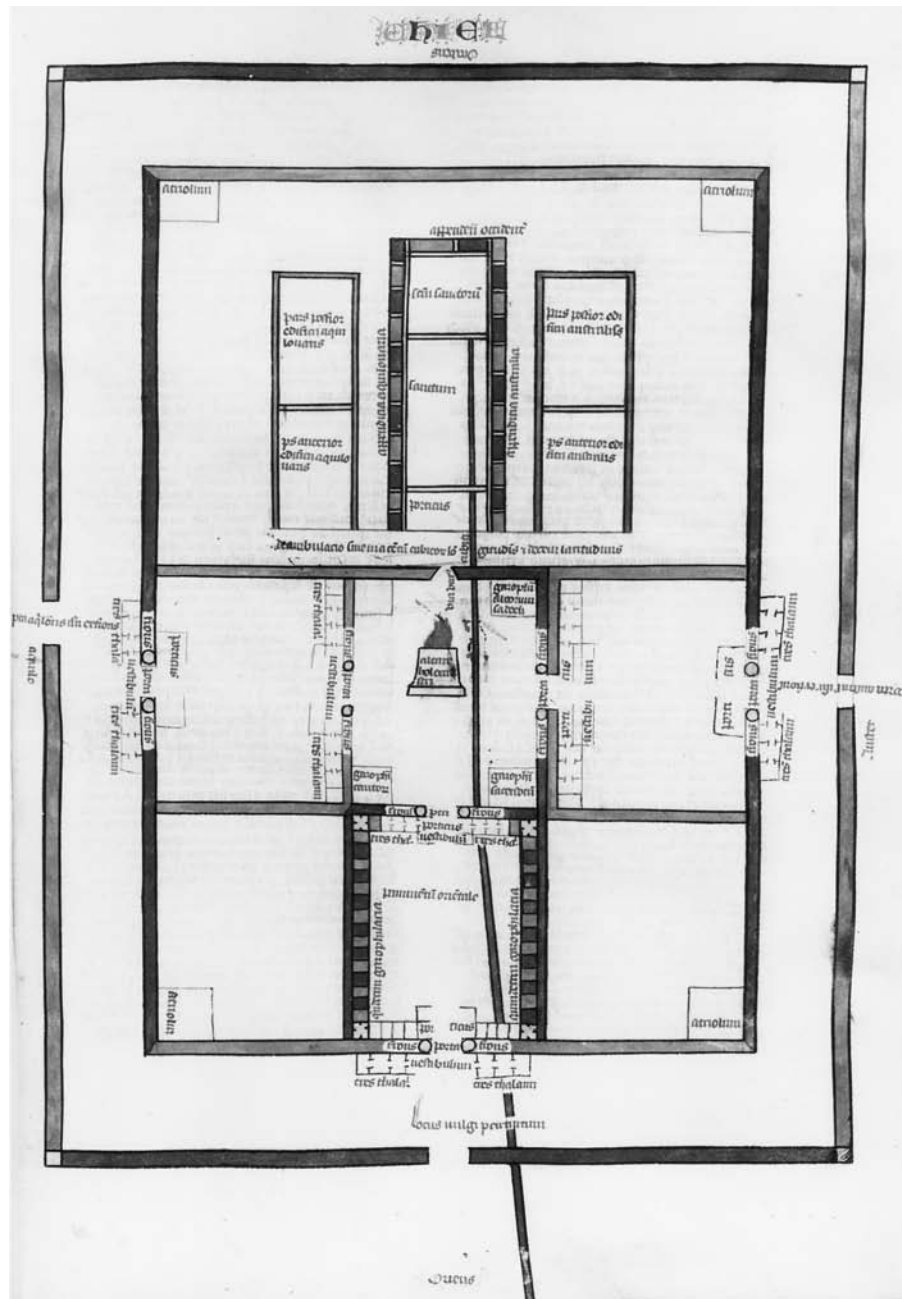


Fig. 9. Plan of the entire Temple complex with spring, from Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam bibliam* (Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, Ms 158, fol. 131).



Fig. 1. The ark of Noah, Ripoll Bible, Ripoll Abbey, first half of the eleventh century. Vatican City, Vatican Library, cod. lat. 5729, fol. 6r.



Fig. 2. The Wilderness Tabernacle, First Bible of León, Valeranica (Castile), 960. León, Real Collegiata de San Isidoro, cod. 2, fol. 50r.



Fig. 3. The Wilderness Tabernacle, Bible of San Millán de la Cogolla, Castile, twelfth century. Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, cod. 2, fol. 58r.



Fig. 4. The Temple of Solomon, Bible of San Millán de la Cogolla, Castile, twelfth century. Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, cod. 2, fol. 193v.

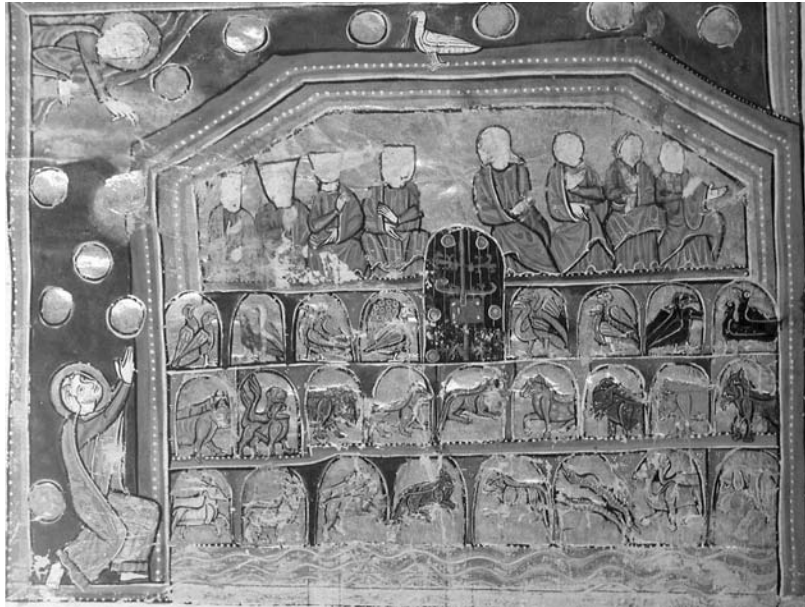


Fig. 5. The ark of Noah, Bible of San Millán de la Cogolla, Castile, twelfth century. Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia, cod. 2, fol. 14v.



Fig. 6. The ark of Noah, First Bible of Joshua Ibn Gaon, Tudela (Navarre) 1300. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, cod. héb. 20, fol. 13r.



Fig. 7. The ark of Noah, Ashkenazi Pentateuch, France (Rouen), 1239. Vatican Library, cod. hebr. 14, fol. 7r.

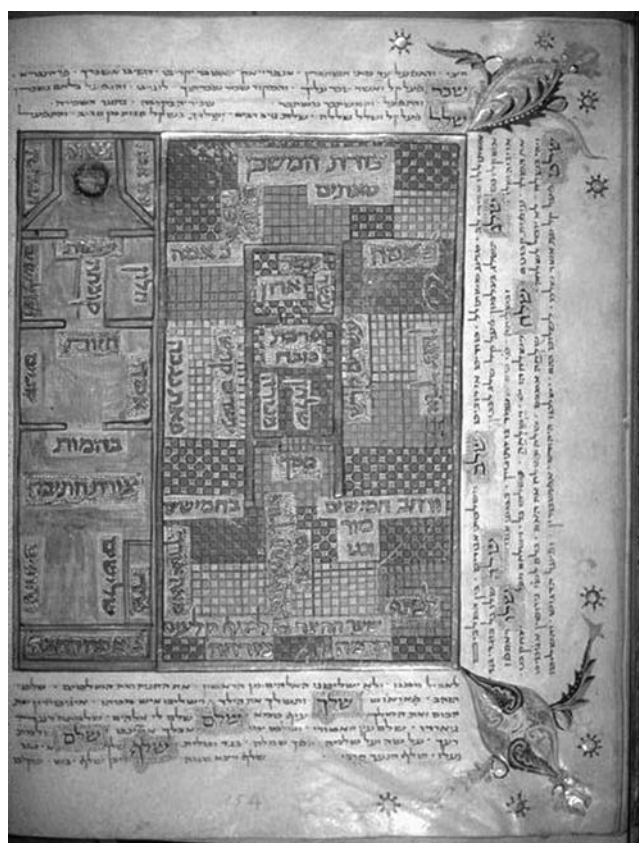


Fig. 8. The form of the Sanctuary and of Noah's ark, Farhi Bible, Southern France (?) 1366–1382. Sassoon Family Collection (n. 368), fol. 154r.



Fig. 1. A woman bathing in a *miqveh*, Hamburg Miscellany, middle Rhine region, ca. 1434; Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Heb. 37, f. 79v.



Fig. 2. The three precepts for women, a small marriage casket, Italy, the fifteenth century; Jerusalem, Israel Museum.



Fig. 3. *Li Livres dou santé* by Aldobrandino de Sienna, France, late thirteenth century; London, British Library, Sloane MS. 2435, fol. 8v.



Fig. 4. David and Bathsheba, St. Louis Psalter, Paris, ca. 1250; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. lat. 10525, fol. 85v.



Fig. 5. David and Bathsheba, Morgan Picture Bible, Paris, ca. 1250;
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M. 638, fol. 41v.



Fig. 6. David and Bathsheba, Morgan Picture Bible, fol. 41v, detail.



Fig. 7. Nativity, a single leaf of an antiphonary, initial of the responsory “H (odie nobis caelorum),” western Germany, late thirteenth century; Frankfurt am Main, Städel, Inv. Nr.14313.



Fig. 8. Bathsheba bathing, Bible Moralisée, Paris, 1220–1230; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, f. 45.



Fig. 9. Pharaoh's daughter saving Moses, Bible of Matteo de Planisio, Naples ca. 1362; Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod.Vat. lat. 3550, fol. 31v.



Fig. 10. Baptism of Christ, Hosios Lukas, the eleventh century.

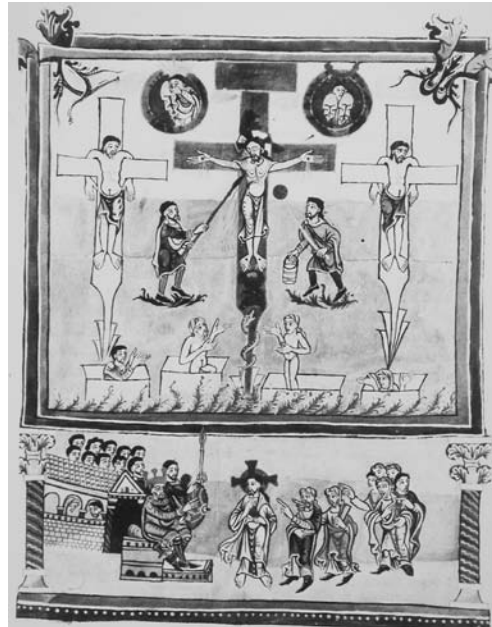


Fig. 1. Christ before Pilate in the lower margin of the miniature with the bust-length head of Procula in the *praetorium*. The Fulda Sacramentary (Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Theol. 231, fol. 60r). (Photo: The Index of Christian Art, Princeton University).



Fig. 2. Christ before Pilate in the upper register of the now badly damaged fresco. Church of San Urbano alla Caffarella, Rome. (Photo: The Index of Christian Art, Princeton University).



Fig. 3. Procula before a seated Pilate. Carving from the jubé in Bourges Cathedral (now in Bourges, Cathedral Museum, ex Louvre Museum, 888–891. (Photo: the author).



Fig. 4. Christ before Pilate with Procula to Pilate's left. Detail from a mid-late thirteenth century Psalter-Hours from northeastern France (Philadelphia, Free Library, Weidener 9, fol. 9v). (Photo: Courtesy of the Free Library, Philadelphia).



Fig. 5. Pilate warned by wife from an icon now in the Coptic Museum, Cairo. Late thirteenth/early fourteenth century. (Photo: Courtesy of the Paul Van Moorsel Centre for Christian Art and Culture).



Fig. 6. Christ before Pilate with Procula at Pilate's side. Miniature from an early fourteenth-century French Book of Hours (New York, Morgan Library, M. 60, fol. 17v. (Photo: Courtesy of the Morgan Library).



Fig. 7. Christ before Pilate with Proculla standing in the center background. Miniature from the Hours of Margaret of Rohan (Princeton University Library, Ms. Garrett 55, fol. 43r). (Photo: Courtesy of Princeton University Library).

MATI MEYER

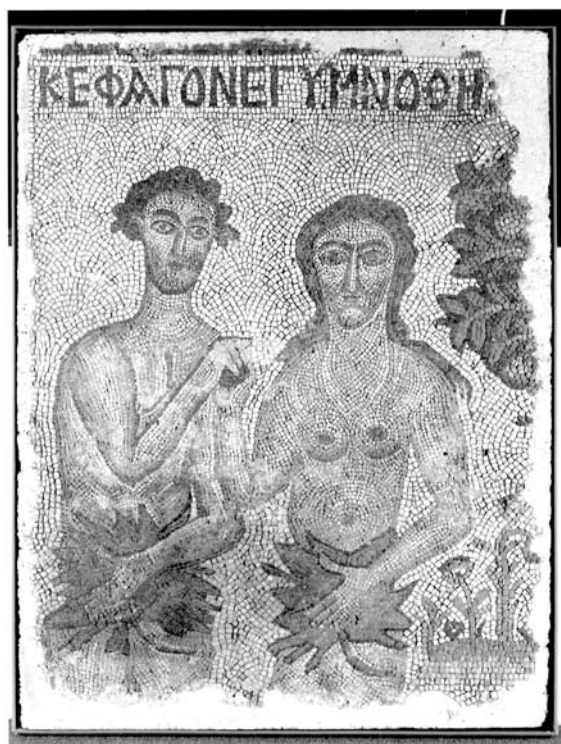


Fig. 1. Floor mosaic: Adam and Eve. Byzantium, Northern Syria, fifth-century, marble tesserae, 142.9 × 107.3 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, John L. Severance Fund, 1969.115.



Fig. 2. Creation of Eve. Octateuch, Constantinople, ca. 1070, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 746, fol. 37r.



Fig. 3. Creation of Eve. San Marco, Venice, mosaic, narthex cupola, thirteenth century.



Fig. 4. Scenes of Adam and Eve. Byzantium, eleventh to twelfth century, ivory plaques over wood, $13.1 \times 46.7 \times 19.7$ cm, Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of J. H. Wade, John L. Severance, W. G. Mather, and F. F. Prentiss, 1924.747.



Fig. 5. The Fall: the Temptation, Eve persuading Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, Adam eating it. Octateuch, Constantinople, ca. 1150, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 746, fol. 37v.



Fig. 6. Covering with fig leaves. Octateuch, Constantinople, ca. 1070, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 747, fol. 23v.



Fig. 7. Covering with fig leaves. Constantinople, ca. 1150, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 746, fol. 40v.

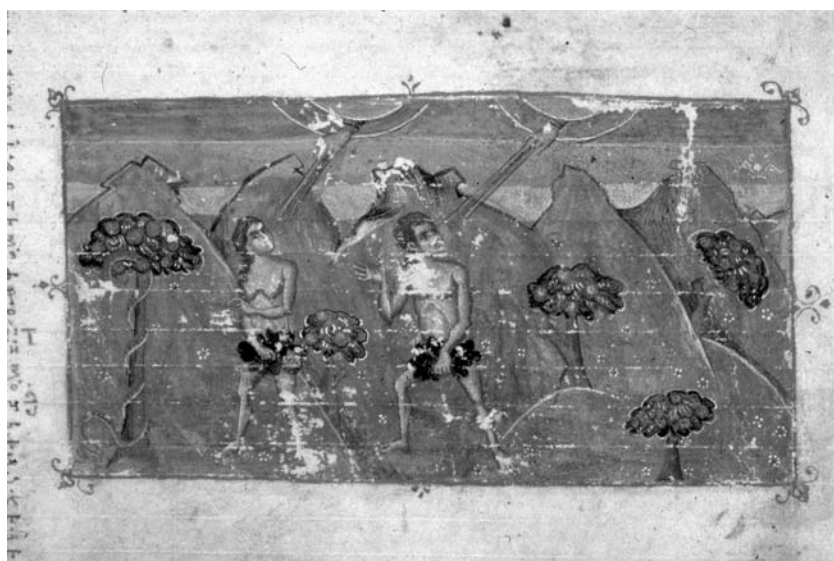


Fig. 8. Denial of Guilt. Octateuch, Constantinople, ca. 1070, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 747, fol. 24r.



Fig. 9. Denial of Guilt; Curse. Octateuch, Constantinople, ca. 1150, Rome, Bibl. Apost. Vat., gr. 746, fol. 41v.



Fig. 1. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 77r (after: M. V. Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri* [Moscow, 1977]).



Fig. 2. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 69r (after: S. Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age, I, Pantocrator 61, Paris grec. 20, British Museum 40731, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques, I* [Paris, 1966], Pl. 10).



Fig. 3. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 114v (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 17).



Fig. 4. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 106v (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 15).



Fig. 5. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 66r (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri*).



Fig. 6. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 19v (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri*).



Fig. 7. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 31r (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri*).



Fig. 8. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 118r (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 18).

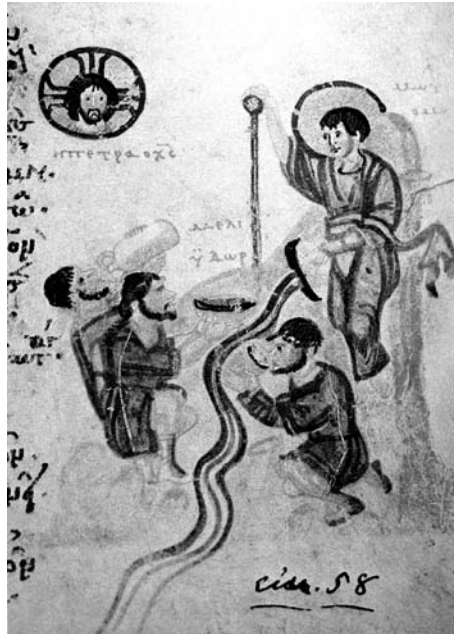


Fig. 9. Pantocrator Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Mount Athos, Pantocrator Monastery, cod. 61, fol. 114r (after: Dufrenne, *L'illustration des Psautiers Grecs du Moyen Age*, Pl. 17).



Fig. 10. Chludov Psalter, Constantinople (?), ninth century, Moscow, State Historical Museum, cod. 129, fol. 8v (after: Ščepkina, *Miniatjuri Khludovskoi Psaltyri*).

EVA FROJMOVIC



Fig. 1. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5 / I, fol. 21v: Isaac on his deathbed refusing the firstborn blessing to Esau, with Jacob running away on the right. In the right margin, Hebrew template for the Christian illuminator (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).

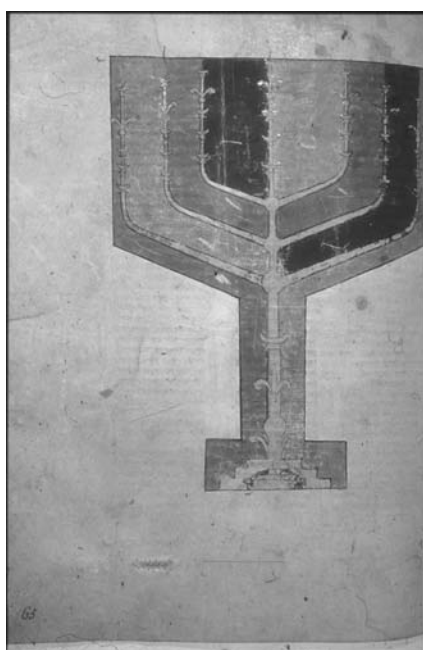


Fig. 2. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5 / I, fol. 65: The *Menorah* (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).



Fig. 3. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 47v (detail): The Calling of Moses, initial panel to the second Parasha in Exodus (Ex. 6:2–9:35) (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).



Fig. 4. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/I, fol. 18v: Binding of Isaac (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).



Fig. 5. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Hebr. 5/II, fol. 209v: Adoration of the Statue and The Three Hebrews in the Fiery Oven, initial panel to the Book of Daniel (photo: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek München).



Fig. 1. Leipzig Mahzor, Universitätsbibliothek, MS V1102/I, fol. 31v, southern Germany, ca. 1310, initial decoration for the *yozzer* to be read on the first special Sabbath.



Fig. 2. Chartres Cathedral, western portal, ca. 1140–1150, Second Coming of Christ.



Fig. 3. Bourges Cathedral, western portal, early thirteenth century, Last Judgment.



Fig. 4. Rylands Haggadah, Manchester, John Rylands University Library, MS heb. 6, fol. 29v, Catalonia, c. 1330, marginal hunting motif.



Fig. 5. London, British Library, MS Add. 14761, fol. 30v, Catalonia or southern France, ca. 1330, Bondage in Egypt, with marginal representation of the messianic era.



Fig. 1. Fol. 1. First page of Genesis.



Fig. 2. Fol. 216. The seal of Solomon.

Fig. 3. Fol. 119v. The *hoshen* of the high priest.



Fig. 4. Fol. 46v. The Lion of Judah.



Fig. 5. Fol. 72v. Aaron's rod turning into a serpent.



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Fig. 7. Fol. 21. Ishmael hunting a bird.



Fig. 11. Fol. 181. The spies carrying the cluster of grapes.



Fig. 13. Fol. 120. Initial word of Leviticus—the Sacrifice of Isaac.

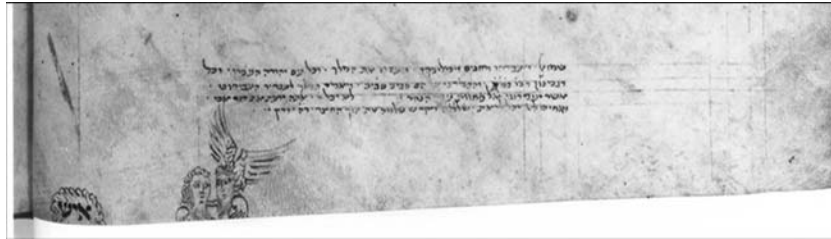


Fig. 14. Fol. 39v. Jacob wrestling with the angel.



Fig. 15. De Castro Pentateuch, 1344, Jerusalem, Israel Museum, Ms. 180/94, fol. 206, Book of Numbers.



Fig. 16. Sacrifice of Isaac. Brabant Pentateuch, 1310. Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Levi 19, fol. 34v.



Fig. 17. Fol. 32v. Jacob's dream.

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עיר השירים אשר
לעלמה



השיירים אשר לשלמה ישקני מנעיקות פיה כיון
טובים הדוד מיד ליהי שומעך טובים שבד על כן
על שלמות אהבך משכני אחרד מרעה הכיאתי י
המלך חרירי עולה ונשכוחה פד נזכרה דוד מיד

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Fig. 1. Initial word panel and Piyyutim for Rosh Hashanah, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, Jerusalem, Jewish National and University Library, Hebr 8°6527, fol. 16r-15v.



Fig. 2. Mounted falconer and vine scroll, *The Catalan Micrography Mahzor*, fol. 10r-9v.

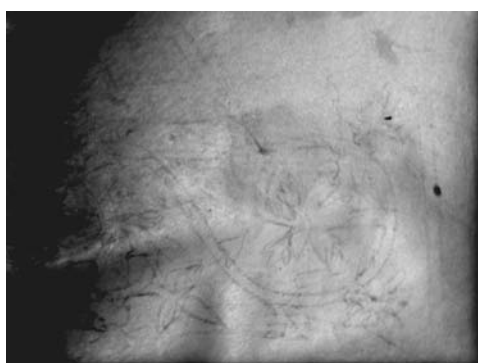
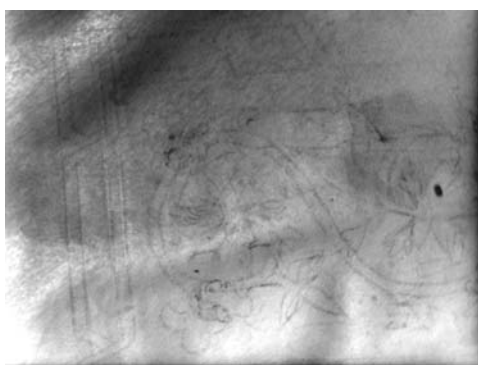
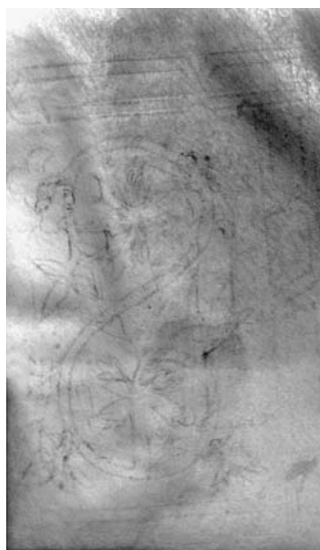


Fig. 3. Unexecuted drawing of the couple seen with infrared photography beneath the Vine scroll, The Catalan Micrography Mahzor, fol. 9v.

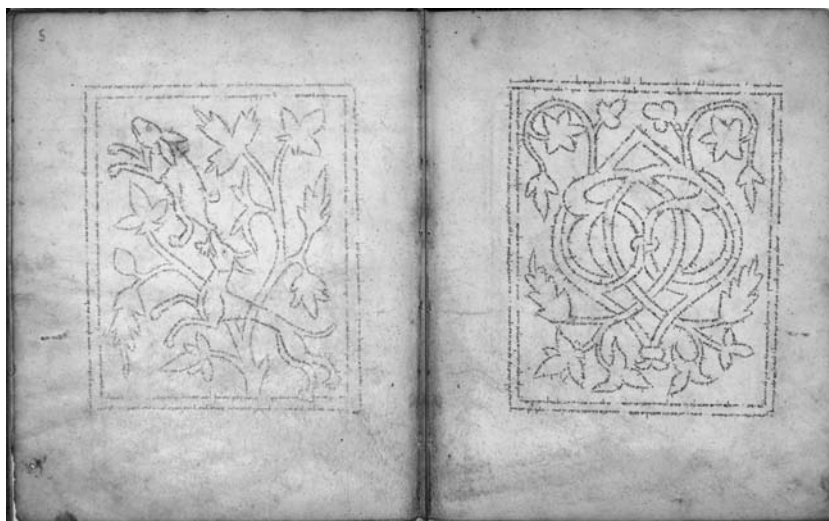


Fig. 4. Hunt scene and knotted foliate interlace, The Catalan Micrography Mahzor, fol. 5r–4v.



Fig. 5. 'From Me with Lebanon My Bride', Liepzig Mahzor, Liepzig, University Library, V. 1102, vol. 1 fol. 64v.

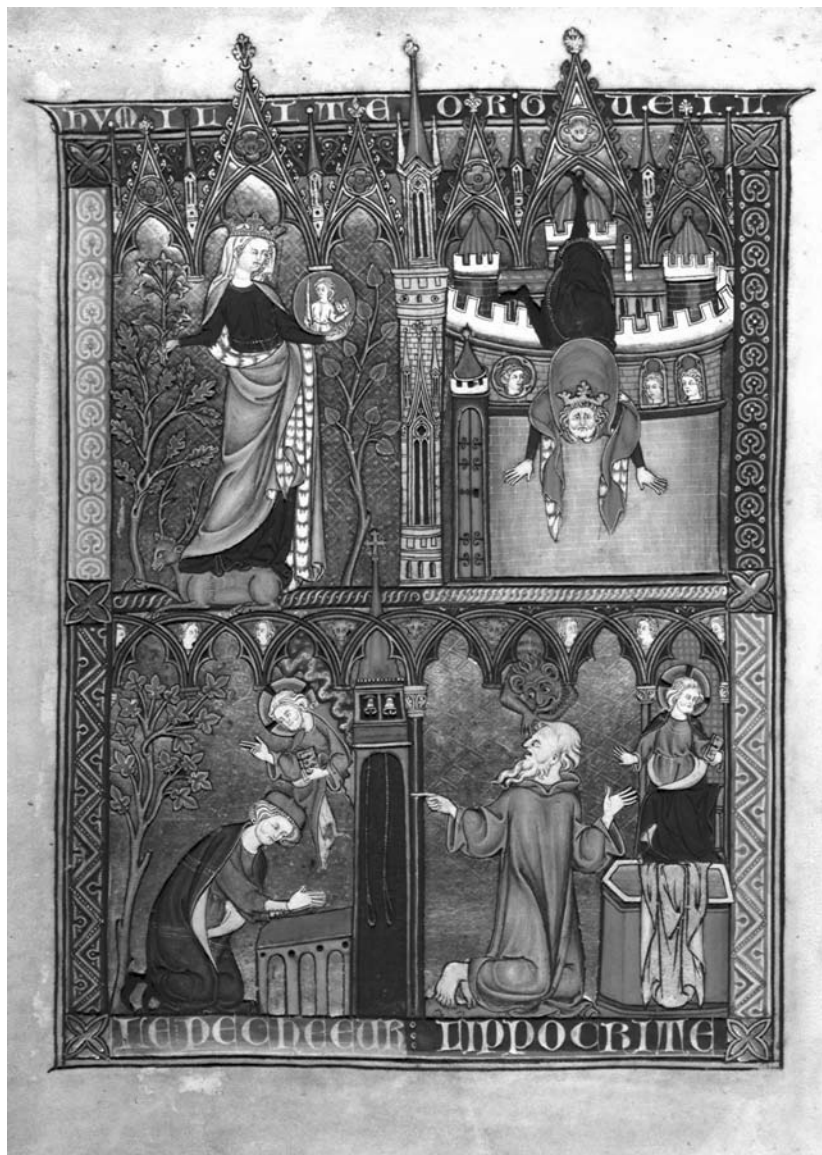


Fig. 6. Humility, *Somme le Roy*, London, British Library, Add. 28162, fol. 5v.

EVELYN M. COHEN



Fig. 1. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 2. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 4r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 3. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 19r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 4. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 37v. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 5. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 201r. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 6. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—King David. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 7. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—family emblem. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.



Fig. 8. New York, Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary MS 8641, fol. 1r—detail—prophet in center of upper border. Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary.